

ETHOS

Amor et intellectus

ISSUE #9
December 2018



**Boy Celebs in
LA - A Report**

**Book Review
by
Zoomzoom4**

**More on
Internet
Security**

**And Some
Seasonal
Content Too!**



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ETHOS

notations



Christmas tree? Check. Decorations? Check... hmm... I'm sure we're missing something... Oh right, Ethos!

Well, no longer are you missing it. For this beautiful December we bring to you yet more quality content for your viewing pleasure, be it for light reading or to provoke your thoughts. I am sure that there are bits and pieces for everyone in here. The ninth issue of Ethos has arrived.

This year has been a bit turbulent and uneven. It started with the closure of three prominent boylove boards, the departure of our graphics designer in February, and the rise of a new board (which actually started in December 2017). I'm glad we're still here today, continuing to do what we set out to do: portray what is true about the orientation of boylove (Dragonlover, Ethos issue 1, September 2016).

I always make a point of appreciating IBLD, and of encouraging others to appreciate it too. We are people, and our beautiful corner of the world deserves some appreciation. I want us to focus on what it is to be a boylover. What does a boy's smile mean to us? Their hands? Their heart? What makes us love boys so much? Appreciate the majesty of life and observe its beauty both in their beings and in their hearts.

Welcome to Ethos 9, everyone. I sincerely hope you enjoy the efforts put into this by our staff, and most importantly, by the contributors who submitted their content to us.

Thank you, and Merry Christmas. Have yourselves a Happy New Year too.

~FalseAlias

BOY Celebs

in LA Final Report

By Music Boy

THE LA SHOW SCENE – FEATURING BOY CELEBS

Los Angeles is the place where young singers and bands come to launch their music careers. Legendary bands like Metallica, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Guns N' Roses started out here. Elton John launched his career at The Troubadour. Other world famous clubs like The Roxy, Whisky A Go Go, and House of Blues, have long histories of hosting famous performers. It's no wonder aspiring singers like Carson Lueders, Johnny Orlando, and Hayden Summerall love to perform at these venues. My last boy celeb report focused exclusively on the Avalon theater. In this report I shall highlight concerts held at these other venues and will focus only on the boy performers.

The Roxy

The Roxy was a strip joint under a different name before it was converted to a music club in 1973. I went to two concerts here. It was the final leg of the Pop Nation tour that featured a boy band from Sweden called The Fooo Conspiracy (now FO&O), another boy band called The Bomb Digz, and Carson Lueders, among others. Carson performed several of his originals such as All Day, Bae Back, and Pop. On a side note I had the pleasure of making a musical.ly with Carson to his single Pop. The other event at the Roxy featured Alex Angelo. He sang and did his DJ stint that excited his

fans to no end. I sent out a tweet about Alex at the end of his gig and was thrilled he acknowledged it. Pictures I took of Carson, The Fooo Conspiracy and Alex Angelo are shown on the following page.

House of Blues – Disney Resort Anaheim

The Vidcona Pop show at The House of Blues was held during VidCon week. The event was hosted by the duo Sam and Colby above. I had access to the interview zone and took several pics of The Ochoa Boyz, Hunter and Brandon Rowland the YouTube phenoms as well as Hayden Summerall and Cody Hebrinko. Carson Lueders was one of the main attractions. His left foot was injured and in a cast, yet he performed on stage and even danced with a hop. He was quite the trooper and gave meaning to the phrase, "The show must go on".

The Yost Theater – Orange County

Winter Lights 3 put on a fabulous show featuring teen boy artists like Cody Herbrinko, Jeffrey Miller, Seth Bishop, Reed Deming, The Ochoa Boyz, Jack Avery, and my favorites Johnny Orlando and Hayden Summerall. Carson Lueders was in the audience but didn't perform. I caught him enjoying Johnny Orlando's performance.



From top left; The Foo Conspiracy and Alex Angelo at The Roxy and Sam and Colby and Hayden Summerall at House of Blues

The Troubadour – West Hollywood

One of my most memorable concerts I attended was at The Troubadour. This is an iconic venue and the Young N Free Concert was held there. Boy artists who performed included Blake Gray, Weston Koury, Simon Britton, Corbyn Besson, Conner Dennis, the boy band New District, but most notable for me were Carson Lueders, Johnny Orlando, Hayden Summerall, and TJ Prodigy who I saw perform for the first time. I chatted with TJ and his sister after the show.

Whisky A Go Go – West Hollywood

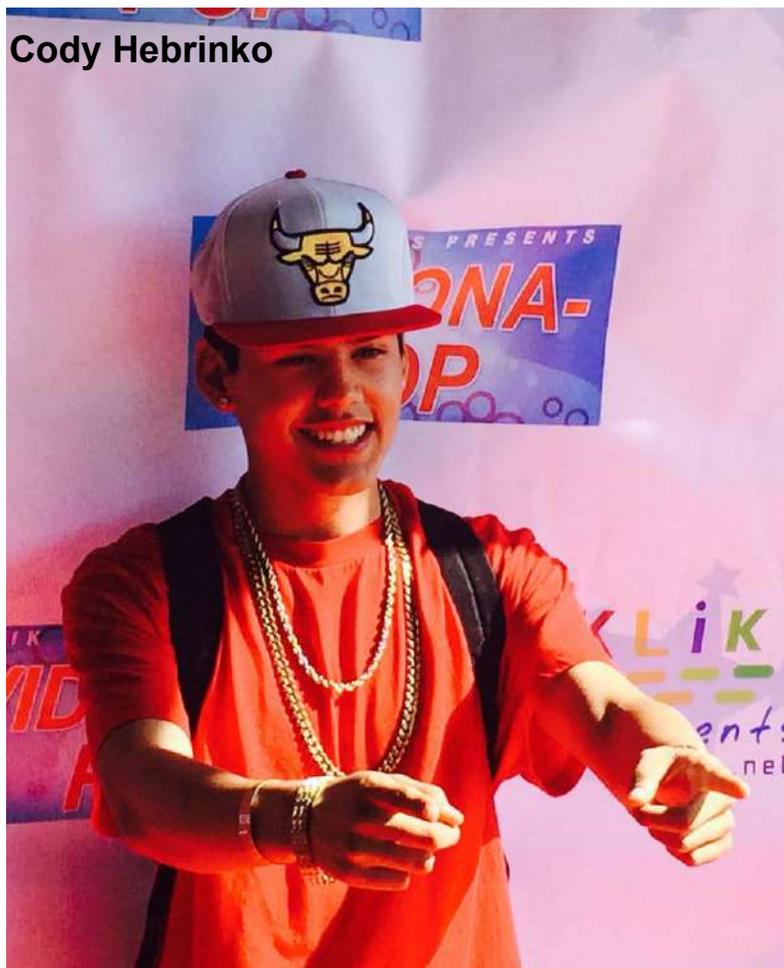
The latest concert I attended was the LA stop of The Boys of Summer Tour. It was held at Whisky A Go Go in West Hollywood. The two singers who I wanted to see the most were the up and coming 11-year old Gavin Magnus and the English singer Mackenzie Sol. Gavin is a singer and actor having appeared on Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network. He has his own YouTube channel where he posts plush puppet videos. He commanded the stage way beyond his years.

I have known Mackenzie Sol, now 18, since he was 14. The last time I had seen him perform on stage was when he was 14. Hence I was excited to see how much he has developed as a singer. He didn't disappoint. Mackenzie Sol was full of energy and sang three songs. The first was his recent original, Laugh. He followed that with an oldie called I Want You to Know Who I Am. Mackenzie's last song was The Middle.

Other notable singers were Luke Chilton, Caden Conrique and a high energy rock boy band from Scotland called Single by Sunday. They all had their hair colored. This was a large group of singers on tour. Hence I also included shots of the scene by their tour bus after the concert while they were getting ready for their next venue in Phoenix, Arizona.

I took videos at every event I attended. One day I hope to provide access to members of Paradise Mountain. This concludes my three articles of the boy celebs concert scene in LA. I hope you enjoyed them.

Cody Hebrinko



Mackenzie Sol



New District



Boys Of Summer



The Unorthodox Thing About Love

Jonas Boehm's first novel is very easy to read. "The Unorthodox Thing About Love" starts off strong, confidently sweeping us into the narrative. Here is a new novelist who wants to not just make an impression, but to dazzle.

Every reader will go in having expectations. We know it's a love story, and being about a man and a boy's attraction makes it "unorthodox" – but the title has a double meaning. It takes place in the world of Orthodox Judaism, with the protagonists being active members of the practicing Jewish community in Cleveland.

It opens with Reuben suffering the devastation and heartbreak that goes with losing his sibling, his twin sister, his last family member. Even after undergoing surgery to donate part of his right lung, to save her, still she succumbs to the cancer.

The first pages present a drugged Reuben being wheeled around by hospital staff in his chair, silently mocking their canned sympathies. Then his other half is gone forever, and his life is empty. He does not see a future, or imagine how he could ever be happy again.

Yet during the funeral proceedings, Reuben's life changes. He never expected something like this to happen, especially now.

- Book Review

By Zoomzoom4

But he feels an immediate connection, and attraction, to one of the boys performing the Orthodox religious service.

Watching this boy give the blessings and prayers, meant to comfort him in his grief, his saddened heart feels joy suddenly. He finds himself wanting to reach out and connect with this beautiful creature. He thinks, "Don't worry

...the relationship is what makes or breaks the whole novel, for it is the centerpiece of all the events.

about comforting me, let me protect and comfort you."

It turns out that young Jonathan is quite the firecracker. Mature beyond his years, sometimes unbelievably so, Jonathan knows what he wants and often gets it. He wants

Reuben. And he knows Reuben wants him, so he is not shy about it. He even has his loyal friends acting as a support system, enabling him to pursue his much older partner. Indeed Jonathan drives much of the relationship forward, even to Reuben's surprise.

And the relationship is what makes or breaks the whole novel, for it is the centerpiece of all the events. The primary question: is this relationship believable?

The answer is yes. The story shifts

seamlessly into stages. First the heartbreak of the sister passing, then the sweep-you-off-your-feet whirlwind of man/boy romance and love, with much erotic suggestion there (yet it remains at suggestion), and then the conflict.

The conflict is with others noticing, and disapproving of, the relationship between the man and the boy. The adults on both sides of the equation – or should I say all sides of the situation – start closing in, and making it more and more difficult for Reuben and Jonathan to see each other, much less keep a romantic relationship going.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the novel is the way it's rooted in the world of Orthodox Judaism. It truly does give an education to those readers who have no idea of that culture. It is shown how this (a schooling environment) is a great way for a man and a boy to meet and see each other. Yet it also shows how easy it is for their relationship to be noticed by those who do not understand.

Indeed the relationship does get noticed, and the storm of opposition from every front is quickly before them both. There are times when I was thinking this is almost like Romeo and Juliet for boylovers. The hurried tone of secrecy in their phone conversations, the "here-they-come-gotta-go" nature of their quick text messages. As we near the climax of the story and the couple is under extreme scrutiny, the author remembers to keep us attuned to what draws these two together in the first place.

Their attraction is more of a mystery to them than it is to us, the readers. Rather than

fictional constructs, Jonathan and Reuben feel like real people, who are inexplicably in love.

And they don't know what to do about it. They might make mistakes, they are only human. Life is messy, and love is even messier.

The moments that the love-struck pair do get to spend together, towards the end when they are under tremendous pressure, feels so bittersweet. They know they are in the twilight of their relationship, for many reasons, but cling to every last remaining moment like the remaining sunlight before it sets.

Being told in first person, it takes place in the mind of the protagonist and goes on at length with his thoughts, feelings, concerns and desires. Feeling like we know this character, Reuben, we find ourselves shouting at him like someone onscreen in a theater at a horror movie show. "No, don't go in that room!" And when he suffers, we feel it.

The book is far from perfect. The pacing of the story is sometimes uneven. It has a few slow moments in the middle, while the early part of the romance moves perhaps a bit too fast. I would have liked more character building scenes of Jonathan and his friends, and more of the relationship between Jonathan and his father. We get to know Jonathan well, but never get into his head.

At 410 pages, *The Unorthodox Thing About Love* is a solid debut for an up-and-coming novelist. More than just a "boylove book," this is a story with wide appeal that could even find mainstream readers.

Michael and Carson's Big Day

By Wolfrunner

One by one, the boys took showers. When they were done Michael called all of them into the kitchen.

He got five bowls out of the cabinet and five spoons out of the drawer.

"Okay boys, who wants a banana split?" Michael asked.

The room filled instantly with the sound of all the boys' voices: "Me, me, me!"

Michael laughed a little as he set all the bowls out on the table and got some vanilla ice cream and chocolate ice cream out of the freezer. He asked Carson to help him, and then asked Trent what flavor he wanted.

"Both please," Trent said.

Michael put a scoop of each flavor into a bowl for Trent while Carson sliced the bananas in half. Michael passed Trent's bowl to Carson, who placed one half of the banana on one side and then the other on the other side. "What do you want on top?" he asked Trent.

"Sprinkles, nuts, chocolate syrup and whipped cream please."

As Carson fixed Trent's banana split, Michael dished out the other boys' ice cream. Simon only liked vanilla, and Matthew took one scoop of each too. Michael scooped out one of each for Carson and himself.

Carson asked Simon what he wanted on

his.

"Nuts, chocolate syrup and a cherry," said Simon.

"Don't you want any whipped cream?"

"Yuck! No thanks."

Matthew quickly said, "I want a lot of everything." Every time Carson put anything on his banana split, Matthew just said, "More more more!" Carson thought that was funny.

After he was done with Matthew's bowl, Carson fixed his own. He had a little bit of everything. Michael fixed his own too, and just had nuts and some chocolate syrup.

When everyone was done with their ice cream they all put their bowls into the dishwasher. Michael told the boys that it was time for bed, and they all made their way to their rooms saying goodnight to everyone as they did.

When Simon passed by Carson's room he stopped and poked his head in. "Hey, can we talk?" he asked.

Carson motioned for him to come in and close the door. Simon stepped inside, quietly closing the door behind him. Carson sat up on his bed, leaning forward with interest. "What's up?"

Simon said, "Look I know I have been an ass, and I want to tell you I'm done with that. You, your dad, and Matthew, have been great

to me. Trent too." Then silence. Simon stopped talking and held both his hands to his face, and soon started crying.

Carson walked up to him, put his arms around his shoulder, and reassured him "It'll be okay."

Carson guided him to his bed and sat him on the edge of the bed. Simon continued to cry for the next five minutes. As he started to calm down, Michael stuck his head into Carson's doorway. Carson turned around to look at Michael and waved his hand to tell Michael not now, then held his finger up to tell Michael he would talk to him in a few minutes.

Michael made the "okay" sign with his thumb and forefinger, then left. He went to the living room and fixed himself a drink. He sat down with the drink in his chair, and waited for Carson.

About twenty minutes later Carson came into the room. His eyes were red and puffy, and Michael could tell he had been crying. Carson sat on the couch across from Michael's chair.

"Is everything okay with Simon?"

"Yes," said Carson. "He was just telling me some of the things him and Trent have been through. He acts tough because he is scared. He's kind of a nice kid and I have an idea but I need to wait until I can discuss it with you."

"Okay, just come to me when you are ready." He replied. Carson smiled at him, agreeing. Michael stood up. "It's getting late, time to get ready for bed now."

"I know," Carson said, getting up off the couch. He went and brushed his teeth, and then put on one of his night diapers so he won't leak. Just as he was finishing, Simon came around the corner and looked into Carson's room and saw him in his diaper.

Simon stood there with his mouth open. He did not expect to see Carson in a diaper.

Carson invited him into the room, and then explained that because he has an underdeveloped bladder and is a very heavy sleeper he has accidents in the day at times, and wets the bed.

Simon seemed to understand. He looked at Carson with red cheeks, somewhat embarrassed. "I didn't mean to stare but it took

me by surprise, is all."

"No problem," smiled Carson.

Simon asked a few questions, like, "does it bother you to have to wear them" and "how do they feel and do you get picked on?" and Carson answered all of them. When he was done Simon told Carson not to worry, that he would not make jokes about it or tease him.

"Thanks," said Carson. "Well it's time for bed." Then Simon did something that surprised Carson.

Simon gave Carson a hug and said, "Thank you for being so nice to me."

When they stopped hugging Carson said, "Goodnight, Simon", and they both went to bed.

The next morning Carson woke up to the smell of bacon and wasted no time to get up and run to the kitchen, knowing there would be waffles and/or pancakes for breakfast. When he got to the kitchen he saw Michael was indeed making both waffles and pancakes, and bacon and sausage links.

All he could say was, "Wow this is great!"

Michael gave a small chuckle and said, "Well we have added two more hungry little boys to the mix here," and told Carson to go get out of his wet diaper.

When Carson returned to the kitchen, Trent and Matthew were there waiting for the waffles to be ready. "Is Simon up yet?" Carson asked.

"Nope." Trent replied.

Carson started, "I'm going to get him," but Michael stopped him.

"Let him sleep," Michael told Carson. "If you wake him up when he's not ready, he'll be crabby the whole day just like you were."

Carson looked at Michael. "Yeah, you're probably right."

About a minute later Simon wandered into the kitchen, rubbing his eyes and yawning, "O y goo at malls o good ..." (Yawn translation: "Oh my God that smells so good.")

About ten minutes later Michael set plates on the table with all the stacks of waffles and pancakes and bacon and sausage, and soon there were arms flailing all over the table like the boys had never been fed before.

After they all finished breakfast and cleaned up their dishes and put them in the dishwasher,

Simon asked Carson to show him how to feed the horses and how to settle them the proper way. So Carson and Simon were off to the stables.

Trent and Matthew wanted to ride four-wheelers. Michael said they would need Carson and Simon to go with them, but they are down at the stables. Trent said we will have to wait until they are done to ask them. Matthew started to whine some. Michael quickly told him to stop and find something else to do.

"Hey I got it, yo Matthew let's go to the lake and swim."

Trent looked at Matthew and asked, "You have a lake?"

"Yep," said Matthew. "You know how to swim?"

"Yes I do." Trent said.

"Okay cool, let's grab some towels and go." Trent stopped suddenly and a frown came over his face.

Matthew said, "What's wrong?"

Trent looked at him. "I don't have a swimming suit."

Michael was listening to the conversation and with Trent's last statement he gave a chuckle, knowing what Matthew was about to say.

"Oh you don't need any swimsuit. We skinny dip."

Trent looked at him funny.

"Don't you know what skinny dipping means?" Matthew asked, then after a moment threw his hands in the air and answered for Trent, "Nope!"

Trent was embarrassed and didn't know what to say.

"It's swimming naked," Matthew said.

Immediately Trent's eyes got wide and "Huh?" escaped from his mouth, before protesting, "What? No, no way. Why? We are both boys."

"Carson and I do it all the time," Matthew reassured him. Trent just looked at him. "Come on, if you end up staying here we will be bound to see each other nude at one time or another." Trent thought about it for a minute, before finally saying, "Oh okay, I guess you're right. I'll

try it."

"Yes!" Matthew said excitedly. "I'm going to get some towels!"

As he ran down the hallway Michael yelled, "No running in the house, young man!"

Matthew yelled back, while still running, "Sorry, sir!"

As Matthew was coming back with the towels Michael grabbed him and give him a big hug. When he let go, Trent was standing there. Michael noticed the slight look of sadness on his face, so walked over and wrapped him into a big hug. When he let go, Trent was smiling widely.

"Thanks, that was nice," he said. "Simon and me never got hugs like that."

"Well you will need to get used to it around here," said Michael, adding, "And it is Simon and I, not Simon and me."

Trent looked at him. "Yes, sir."

"Okay okay, enough of the mushy stuff, let's go," said Matthew, grabbing Trent's arm and pulling him to the door.

Michael just laughed and told the boys to be home by 3 o'clock .

The lake was about half a mile from the house, and on the way there the boys got to know each other better. They talked about what they like to do, what they like to eat, the kind of TV shows they like and video games they play. As they approached the lake, Trent looked up and his eyes widened.

"Holy crap is that your lake?" He asked. Matthew nodded, smiling. Trent was impressed. "Wow that is so cool!"

The lake was man-made and had a small section of beach. At the deepest part it was about 40 feet deep. It was about 20 acres, and for the most part covered by groups of trees.

The boys hurried down to the beach and Matthew dropped his towel and quickly took his shirt off, unbuttoned his shorts and looked over to Trent. "What are you waiting for? Strip."

Trent just stood there, looking at the ground. "I don't know."

"Well let's go," said Matthew. Trent knew he couldn't hide anymore, and took off his shirt, then fiddled with the button on his shorts.

Looking steadily at Trent, Matthew

unbuttoned his shorts and slid them down his legs. Matthew was now standing there in his birthday suit.

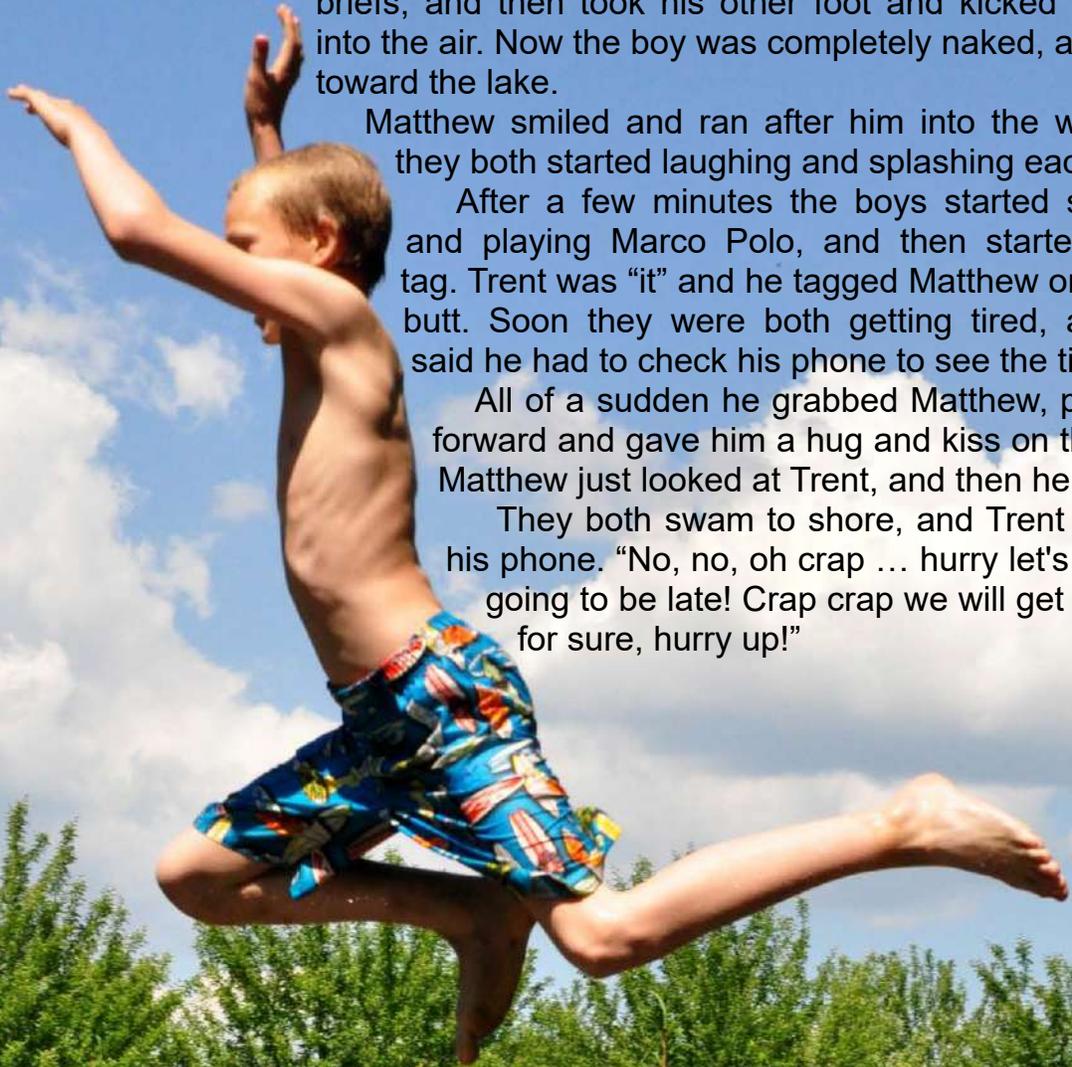
After a moment, Trent finally put his fingers around the waistband of his Batman briefs and pulled them all the way down his legs, to his feet. He slipped one foot up out of his briefs, and then took his other foot and kicked the briefs into the air. Now the boy was completely naked, and he ran toward the lake.

Matthew smiled and ran after him into the water, and they both started laughing and splashing each other.

After a few minutes the boys started swimming and playing Marco Polo, and then started playing tag. Trent was "it" and he tagged Matthew on his bare butt. Soon they were both getting tired, and Trent said he had to check his phone to see the time.

All of a sudden he grabbed Matthew, pulled him forward and gave him a hug and kiss on the cheek. Matthew just looked at Trent, and then he smiled.

They both swam to shore, and Trent looked at his phone. "No, no, oh crap ... hurry let's go, we're going to be late! Crap crap we will get grounded for sure, hurry up!"



Our *secret* Christmas

By Realme

Everything was perfect. The roast was almost done in the oven. The fireplace crackled with a merry blaze. The tree, with its ornaments, stood beautiful in the living room. One small present wrapped in shiny red and green paper sat beneath it. It looked just like Christmas, except that it was Boxing Day.

For the hundredth time I looked out the window at my neighbor's house; past the snow-covered yard and the icy trees under a gray sky. I looked at the house where no love was. I waited.

At last my patience was rewarded. A car pulled out of the garage, down the driveway, and out of sight down the street.

I didn't have to wait for long. Less than five minutes later, a small figure bundled up in a winter coat, scarf, and hat, burst out the front door and hurried down the path; only to slip on the ice and fall.

"Oh!" I cried.

The figure got up, brushed itself off, and continued down the path more carefully this time.

Now recognizable as a young boy as he got to the sidewalk, he turned and headed for my house.

I nodded with approval. I knew he was impulsive and might rush in a straight line across the yard to me, so I had warned him about how his footprints would leave a telltale sign that he had visited me; defying his parents.

My young friend was careful. In his own house he had to be.

I moved to the front door and had it open by the time he reached the threshold. A quick glance up and down the street showed me the coast was clear. I let him in and closed the door to the cold rush of air from outside. I immediately got warmed up by a tight hug around my middle.

"Merry Christmas," he said; his voice sounding muffled because his face was pressed into my chest and against my heart.

"Merry Christmas, Ben." I knelt down to look at his cute ten-year-old face; white skin, cheeks rosy from the cold and running, full red lips, and dark brown eyes. I grabbed his hat by the pompom and squeezed.

"Honk!" I said. He giggled.

I popped the hat off to reveal short blonde hair. Putting the hat on the sideboard, I unzipped his jacket and hung it up, then unlaced his boots. He stepped out of them and into a pair of child-sized slippers I kept by the door; his slippers.

"I have something for you," he said with a sly grin. He reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a small package. "I had to sneak the paper and tape away while they were asleep."

"Thanks buddy," I said, giving him a squeeze. "Go put it under the tree and I'll pour you a cup of mulled cider. It's just now ready."

He skipped to the tree, squealed with delight at seeing the present there, and placed his own offering solemnly next to it.

We sat on the sofa facing the fireplace, each with a steaming mug in our hands. We breathed in the smell of cinnamon and cloves for a minute while enjoying each other's silent company. Ben looked up at me; concern stamped on his cherubic face.

"How did yesterday go for you?" he asked.

I shrugged. Holiday time was never happy time for me. I spent my Christmases alone. At least now I had something to look forward to. This year would be different. He gave my hand a sympathetic squeeze.

"And how was your Christmas?" I asked.

Ben made a face and looked away. I put an arm around him. There was no point telling him everything was OK, or that everything would get better. Not with those parents. Ben was an only child and an unwanted one.

I had met the family at a neighborhood social event one summer. I rarely went to those things, but the loneliness had gotten so crushing I had decided that even bland talk with neighbors who would never become friends would be better than spending another Saturday alone. It was there that I had met Ben. Actually I met his parents first, boisterously drunk before most of us had even finished our first glass. They were crass and arrogant; trash talking about all the neighbors who weren't there and telling nasty gossip about people at their office we didn't even know.

As the party progressed, they went from boisterous to crabby; snapping at each other and anyone who said something they didn't like. I felt bored and wanted to leave. The few kids at the party were either too old or far too young for me. I decided I'd have another beer just to be polite, and then make my excuses and leave.

When I went into the kitchen to fetch one, I met Ben. He sat alone at the kitchen table with a pencil and a spiral notebook. When he saw me he flipped the page to a blank one, but not before I saw a talented sketch of a race car.

"Hey, that looks good," I said. I meant both the sketch and him. He stared back at me like I was speaking some strange foreign language.

"Really?" he asked in a sweet voice. The

word sounded surprised and came out like a melody to me.

"Really. Can I see?"

Bashfully, he turned back to the page with the race car. With only a pencil, he had managed to capture shading and the reflection of sunlight on the hood. He had a natural talent. When I repeated the compliment, he flipped to another page and showed me a knight, followed by a submarine. Then he closed the notebook and saw it was labeled "Math".

"That's the best decorated math notebook I've ever seen," I said.

"Don't tell my parents," he said, suddenly worried. "If they knew I was drawing in this they'd kill me. They think I'm doing my homework."

"Who are your parents?" A nasty drunken laugh echoed from the living room. The boy's face darkened.

"Oh," I said. I turned back to him. "You know? I'm a professional artist."

"Really?"

"Really. I do commercial art to pay the bills, but I also paint and sketch. Look."

I took the pencil from his hand, trembling a bit at the brief touch of our fingers, and within a minute I had drawn a stallion rearing on its hind legs.

"Cool," he said smiling.

"You have talent too," I told him. "You could be a professional artist someday."

The boy slumped, looking sadly at his notebook. "My parents say being an artist is stupid," he mumbled.

"Being an artist isn't stupid."

When he didn't reply I put my fingers on his little chin and gently, but firmly, turned his face to mine. I looked him in the eye.

"Being an artist is not stupid," I repeated.

I couldn't believe what I was doing—touching a child who was not mine. What if someone walked in? But I couldn't stop myself, because when I was his age I had needed to hear the exact same thing and no one had said it.

His eyes filled with tears, and a friendship was made.

Now here he was sneaking off to celebrate

Christmas; or the day after Christmas with me. We had planned the whole thing out. His parents were driving to the city to get hammered with some friends and wouldn't be back until late. Like on other days they went away, Ben would send text messages every couple of hours to see where they were just to be on the safe side, but we both knew they wouldn't come back early. They never did.

He cuddled up against me, still sipping his mulled cider. We hadn't said a word for a good ten minutes. Ben liked these long stretches of intimate silence. He didn't get much silence at home. Sometimes I could hear the arguments

come up here today. I didn't want us to be visible from the street. When you're like me, it pays to be careful. Caution should become a habit.

So says the man with a painting of a ten-year-old boy he isn't supposed to know sitting on an easel in the middle of his studio.

It showed Ben reclining on a sofa, sketching away in a sketchpad, eyes wide with eagerness; the little red tip of his tongue sticking out one side of his mouth like it always did when he concentrated. It was from a photo I had taken of him a few weeks back. And yeah, it was evidence, something I shouldn't have in



from my place even with the windows closed.

At last he drained the last drop of his mug, turned those big brown eyes up to mine, and asked, "How is the painting going?"

"Come on. I'll show you."

We went upstairs to my studio, a large room with floor-to-ceiling windows. I had the curtains drawn at the moment since the light was so bad outside... and because I knew he would

case questions ever got raised and the house searched. But there was only so far I would go to compromise with "straight" society. He was my magical little boy, and I wanted to capture the image of his fleeting youth.

"Wow, it's almost done," he said, hugging me around the middle. "Will you do another one once this is finished?"

"Another and another, at least two a year to

document how you grow up. Want to sketch for a while?"

"Yes!" he skipped over to a large table on one side of the room. Here he had his colored pencils, his charcoal, his paints, and his sketchpads, all the things his parents wouldn't buy him because his talent was "stupid." All the things my parents never bought for me.

He got to work on a detailed jungle scene he had been doing for the past few visits. It was his most ambitious project to date—every leaf, every frond drawn in precise detail, along with various jungle animals and birds in brilliant color. There was a snake twisted around a tree that had subtle changes in hue all along its body. I sat down beside him and sketched him sketching. He used to get distracted when I did that and start giggling. Now he said it made him calm.

Ben practiced his art every time he came over here. He studied too. He'd pore through my collection of art books, studying every era, asking me endless questions. He loved Classical art, and Renaissance art showing Classical themes. The Impressionists were "pretty neat" too, but he said they didn't have "interesting people." And he couldn't stand the junk they called contemporary art; smart kid.

We sketched until the roast was done.

Before we ate, he texted his parents and got back the reply that they had just made it to the city. They had been delayed because of the bad roads.

"Yippie!" Ben pumped his fist in the air. "That means they'll be late coming back."

We did a silly little dance in the kitchen and then I served lunch...Christmas turkey with all the trimmings.

"I got rid of the lunch they left me in a clever way," he said.

"Really? How?"

"I fed it to the dog. Mom burnt the roast anyway."

We had a good laugh at that. He hated that dog—a yapping, biting little beast. Not even the family pet gave him peace. Only I did.

"You're a great cook," he said as he looked at a large hunk of meat on his plate.

"The secret ingredient is love."

He rolled his eyes. "Don't get all mushy."

We laughed and he blew me a kiss.

"Now who's getting mushy?" I asked in a teasing voice.

"Once we're done let's cuddle by the fire and open our presents."

How could I say no?

But we took our time with our meal, knowing that we had all day. Once we finished, Ben helped me clean up. I imagined him sullen and withdrawn at home; his spiteful parents not getting any chores out of him, but at my place he was always eager to wash the dishes or clean my brushes or arrange my art supplies. I could have gotten him to vacuum the floor and wash the windows if I had asked.

"Enough work," I said as we dried and put away the last dish. "Let's check out what's under the tree."

He took my hand and we walked into the living room.

"Wouldn't it be cool if we could hold hands for real?" he asked.

I squeezed his hand. "This isn't real?"

"I mean, like, in public."

I nodded. "Yes, Ben. That would be great."

"Wouldn't it be great if we could go on vacation together? Like to the beach or one of those big art museums in Europe you used to sketch in?"

I gave him a hug, burying my face in the sweet smell of his hair. "I'd like that more than anything in the whole world."

Actually there was something I'd like even more, but despite his hugs and his snuggles and his flirtations he wasn't ready. I didn't push it. I knew with devastating clarity that if I used the least amount of pressure and manipulation, I could get this loyal child to do anything and everything I wanted. But that was unthinkable. He would get what he needed or wanted from me and nothing more. If the day came that he needed something more, he would make me the happiest man in the world. If not, I'd be happy knowing that I had made him happy.

We sat on the sofa; the crackling fire warming us. Each of us now held our presents.

"You first," he said, nudging me. Carefully, I opened the gift. Inside was a fine-tipped pen

"I got it at the school stationary shop. It's what the art class uses." His face grew uncertain. "I know it's not what professionals use. It's the best they had, though."

"It's wonderful." I kissed him on his forehead to smooth out the wrinkles of worry. "I'll draw something with it today."

"You can draw me!" he said brightly.

"My favorite subject. Now see what you got."

He grinned and opened his gift, then laughed. "You got me a pen too!"

"Great minds think alike."

"Hey, this is nice." He examined it.

The pen was top of the line; with a fine steel tip and a set of different color cartridges.

"It's for working at your house." I never referred to his place as "home". That's what he called my house. "The tip is fine enough that you can imitate those nineteenth century engravings you like."

"But how do I explain it to them?"

"You got some Christmas money from your grandmother, right?" His grandma was the only decent person in his family. Too bad she lived on the West Coast.

"Yeah."

"Tell them you bought it at the school stationary shop."

"It doesn't have anything this good."

"Like they'd know."

He laughed, and then gave me a sly look. "I'll sketch you and you can sketch me."

"All right."

"Like artists' models," he said.

My heart thumped in my chest. Did he know what that meant? Was that sudden flush of red

in his cheeks from the fire or from something else? Before I could sort out my thoughts and come up with a reply, he looked down at the pen I gave him and suddenly burst into tears.

I drew him to me. "Ben, don't cry. I love you. If you're scared, you don't have to—"

"Why can't it be like this all the time?" he

wailed. "I only get to see you when they're gone!"

"You'll get New Year's Eve with me."

"That's a week away," he moaned,

holding me tight. "Why do I have to wait a week? I want to live here. I know I can't, but I want to!"

Struggling to control my

emotions, I gently lifted his face to mine; like that time we first met in my neighbor's kitchen.

"Ben, I'm sorry we can't be together all the time. You know I want that more than anything. And I know you see it as all dark and endless. I've told you about my parents. I had it just as bad and I survived. I had no one, not even a neighbor I could sneak off to when my parents were away. I had no one, and I made it. You'll make it too. You'll grow up and get the hell out of there. And when you're old enough to leave, you and I will take that trip and sketch in all the great galleries of Europe."

"Promise?" he sniffled.

"Promise," I replied, wiping his eyes.

"But that's eight years away."

"Eight years of visits. Eight years where you can practice your art here. You got to be good to sketch in the Prado in Madrid or the National Gallery in London. And you will be that good. You're strong, Ben. Stronger than you realize. You could make it without me just like I made it without an adult friend. But you don't have to.



I'll be here for you. You won't grow up alone like I did."

We held each other for a long time. I rubbed his back until his muscles eased and his breathing slowed.

At last he looked up at me. "Shall we go upstairs and sketch each other now?" he asked.

I could feel myself blushing and knew he could see my face redden.

"Whatever you want," I replied, my throat dry.

"I have to practice," he said, a smile creeping back to his face. "All those Greek statues and Renaissance paintings aren't easy to draw, you know."

"You can practice all you want, Ben."

We held each other's hand as we went upstairs to the artist's studio.

"Still she haunts me..." - Lewis Carroll

Visions of Alice

<https://alicelovers.net/>

Internet Security

Surprise, it's the sequel you never knew was coming! Take a seat, you got some reading to do.

Hypothetical: Once upon a time there was a boylover who was a little careless. He was caught after being identified by the police. They managed to put together a profile of him from various posts he made on boylove forums, and following a raid on his home address police discovered some not-so-legal material. He went to prison, and has yet to be released.

This boylover made two critical mistakes.

1. He had illegal stuff. I really shouldn't need to emphasise how stupid having anything illegal is. This whole problem would've been avoided if he was smart and just didn't have any illegal stuff.

2. He thought he was being smart and careful when he posted some details of his life. Unfortunately, this is the second part of why the police were able to find him. Sorry dear.

His internet habits were pretty smart in terms of preventing backtracing from IP addresses and ISPs. He used Tor and layered a VPN on top of it to make sure that even if Tor failed he had another line of protection.

Thanks to his numerous semi-detailed accounts of certain events which occurred near where he lived, the police traced his relative location to St. Louis, Missouri. From there, they found people who remembered the event. After months of searching, they identified him and the man was promptly arrested.

Moving away from the hypothetical for a brief moment: It is all too easy to think something you are posting is just a small thing and no one could possibly know where it's happening or who it's about. You'd be wrong though. Even mentioning what job you have

can sometimes be enough for a profile on you to be started. It's that simple.

There are four things which can lead to identification, and posting any of them genuinely isn't a good idea.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest two are age and gender. They can narrow down a search a hell of a lot. How many 32 year old males do you think there are in St. Louis, Missouri? Our hypothetical guy told everyone that he's 32, he's male, and he lives in or around the city of St. Louis. His first mistake is thinking those three bits of info aren't identifying. They are.

On their own, and even grouped, there are still a lot of people to search through. We'd need something else to further narrow the list. The city (as of 2015) has 310,000 people, and around 1/3 of these can be reasonably assumed to be adult males. Even fewer happen to be 32 years of age. Still a lot of people, but far less than the entire population of America. Even if he had not specified his age and gender, the statement of city still narrows down stuff a lot.

"How did the police determine that he lives in or around St. Louis? He hasn't specifically said it!" Well, dearies, he described numerous events which happened only in St. Louis. One of those was specific enough to make a reasonable assumption that he lives within 10 minutes of the city.

What else can we scrape from his postings? As the police read through, they will find anything they can to try build a profile for the person they're looking for. Anything he posted is viable for review and could be very

By FalseAlias

important in building the profile, so they review everything. Through these reviews, they discovered that the man has a job at an elementary school, and they held a sports day event in the past two weeks.

Off they go, scouring database of elementary schools until they get a match. If they do, they enquire about the rough details of the man until a school says they have an employee matching the given description (male, aged 32). For each match they'll go through the person's personal details and potentially interview them.

In a few weeks, after many interviews and visits, they find someone who strikes them as suspicious. "This is him," they think, prior to interviewing him a second time. They ask about the sports event and the man, named Gavin, gives details that are consistent with some of the accounts posted online.

The police issue a warrant to search his home and workplace for various types of media, primarily images and/or photographs. The warrant allows officers to search any part of the house, and also to confiscate any electronic storage device which may contain a picture found on the property.

The warrant is based on some of his postings at the forums, stating that he took pictures during the sporting event for his own "private collection", and others posts which suggest that the children never knew they were being pictured or what he'd be doing with these "special pictures" from the day. Given the nature of the forums, the police and the judge signing the warrant felt there was enough reason for a search.

Several hours later, the search is executed and Gavin is arrested for possession and distribution of child pornography. Evidence uncovered on his computer indicated that he had substantial volumes of child porn, and had even sent a good portion of this to other people based on chat logs on his accounts. It was clear from the initial inspection that the porn ranged from solo sexual acts to group videos which depicted penetrative sexual acts by both adults and children. The pictures from the sports day are also found.

Gavin attempts to plead not guilty at arraignment, and an expedited trial date is set shortly thereafter. Following a trial, he is found guilty on all counts and sentenced to a minimum of 20 years in prison. He is also ordered to sign the sex offenders register for life, due to the quantity of child porn seized.

News travelled fast and the online boylove forum he regularly used to visit figured out that he had been caught by police. They found details of his trial online through newspapers of the area.

This served as a warning to everyone in our hypothetical community: Be careful with both what you say and how you say it. Gavin was found because he told everyone his age, gender, city, and occupation. That's not a lot of somewhat non-specific information, but it was enough. The description of the sport event helped considerably in the hunt for Gavin.

Perhaps what helped more was Gavin's false sense of security. Being protected by VPNs and Tor isn't all you need. As demonstrated, no physical tracing of IP addresses or forum handles was even done. They read his posts, like anyone else would, except the police used his posts to build a profile of Gavin so they could find him. A shame that he was so open.

So, what would I recommend to avoid this?

1. Don't talk about your job in any detail. At most, reference the type of work you do. Don't say where, or for what company. If you work on checkouts, "retail" would be enough.

2. Don't talk about events near to where you are. If you really must, wait at least a week before saying anything and only talk to people you trust. I wouldn't post such a thing publicly in any case.

3. Don't tell people what city you live in. Country is fine, state is fine, but not the city. Not the county. It narrows down the search pool a lot by mentioning the city.

4. The best piece of advice possible: Don't have anything illegal. It's just a waiting game if you do, and you'll always lose.

And again, as always: trust carefully, boylovers.

Respecting Children

A Baby Taking a Sip

By BL in Black

For those who know me, they will likely know I am a firm advocate of respecting children's rights more, in regards to sexual freedom and many other things, in terms of not treating them as second class citizens. I feel that in terms of age restrictions, they should only be necessary when they clearly and tangibly protect children from real harm. So if I may, I would like to invite you to consider the following scenario which I remember from my childhood oh so long ago:

I remember we went to visit some friends of the family and the adults were drinking wine with their meal. At some point during the course of the meal, one of the adults, who was sitting next to a baby who was his son, gave the baby a sip from his glass of wine. I was a little shocked, for even at that age I was aware that society tended to frown upon young people consuming alcohol. So I politely interrupted and told him I didn't think he should give that to the baby. He then got very defensive and asked me, "why?"

Although I didn't think much of it at the time, over time this situation has really made me think. Was there really any real reason why he should not have allowed his baby to have a small sip of his wine? I've been pondering over the conflicting reasons in my head.

We know, for example, that the law frowns upon giving kids alcohol under 21 or a particular age defined by a State or county law. But that law mainly targets and prevents young people from getting drunk, reckless, and careless with alcohol. What about kids who are offered a drink with their parents?

We also know that alcohol can be harmful

to young brains, or any brain, if consumed excessively. But does this really apply here? The baby only had a sip after all, and it doesn't seem likely that such a small amount should really damage a brain even that young.

But then a part of me used to think, "Well, too bad for common sense - everybody knows babies shouldn't have alcohol". But then I've had to stop and think. Where does that assumption really come from? Is there really any rational basis for stopping babies being given a sip of wine from their parents? Perhaps the only basis for preventing this from happening in our society is based upon the whole idea of supposed protection of innocence and corruption of minors, which, in my opinion, is ambiguous and dodgy at best.

So personally, I have concluded that this all comes down to respecting children. If there is no rational reason for not offering even someone as young as a baby a sip from a glass of wine, then in terms of respecting their rights as first class citizens, you shouldn't stop them. It's the same thing in my view with underage sex. If there is no reason other than issues such as disease and pregnancy to protect minors from engaging in sex with each other, then they shouldn't be denied the right to experience these pleasures.

Over time, this whole thing has come together in my mind, and helped paint a big picture in terms of how we, as a society, just don't respect children as first class people.

Thanksgiving

at Aunt Marilyn's House

By Dragonlover

As I reflect back on holidays gone by, I keep thinking of Thanksgiving. Many, if asked would say that past Christmases would stand out in their mind. But not so for me.

Certainly, Christmases were very special for my family, but Thanksgiving seemed extra special, and for that I really don't know why. I'll take you back to Thanksgiving Day, 1980. I was 11 years old at the time.

Ah, Thanksgiving! A time to get together with family and friends and celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. As per family tradition, Thanksgiving was to be celebrated at my Aunt Marilyn's house, while Christmas Eve was held at my parents' house. Preparations began early that late, cold November day.

"Jack? Jack! Come on! Pick a tie and let's get a move on! Marilyn and Chick are expecting us by 4! And can you please make sure James is ready? Please and thank you!" my mother calls upstairs to my dad. Undoubtedly she is already dressed in her best dress for this evening's dinner with the family. My dad, who absolutely hated getting dressed up for any occasion always had a smart reply to Mom.

"Shirley, come on up here! These socks look exactly alike. I can't tell the dark blue ones from the black ones. You know I'm color blind!" Dad calls out. He always had to try and get Mom's goat when he knew she was in a hurry.

"Jack, please have James do it. He's not color blind, and he's already up there," Mom

says.

I knock on Dad's open bedroom door and see him with two socks in either hand. He's looking at them under the light, trying to tell the difference.

"I got it, Dad. The one in your left hand is the black sock," I tell him. He looks closer and squints.

"Are you sure?" he asks. He's serious.

"Yes, Dad. I am. YOU'RE the color blind one, remember?" I say with a giggle.

"Oh I am, am I?" he laughs and pulls me to him.

"Lookin' great, Doc. Did you pick the tie out? It really does look good," he says.

"Thanks, Dad. You look good, too. And uh, Mom sounds like she's getting a little mad, so I guess we better hurry up. Its 3:30. You know how she is about being on time," I say.

"OK, Doc. Go on down and tell her I'll be down in less than five minutes, then we'll be off."

I head downstairs where I smell my Mom's perfume before I see her; Chanel #5. It was one of her favorites. She's at the bar mixing my dad a scotch and soda. He always needed a scotch and soda before any kind of family function. He once told me that it helps him to stay calm, cool and collected. The thing was, I never really saw him when he wasn't calm, cool and collected.

"There you are! Come over here and let me look at you. Uh huh.... Uh huh.... Very nice, James! Shoes shined, shirt tucked in and

buttoned correctly, and tie on straight! I'd say you'll be the bell of the ball but that's for girls!" she laughs.

Thanks, Mom. Dad says he'll be down in a minute and we'll go. May I have a small snack before we go? I'm starving!" I ask.

"Are you serious? No way. Your Aunt Marilyn has slaved all day I'm sure to cook us a great Thanksgiving dinner, and you're going to show up good and hungry," she tells me with a smile, fixing a stray hair on my head.

Dad finally comes down, trying to make his shirt collar more comfortable. I can tell he's already irritated, and we haven't even left the house yet.

"Well now. Jack, you look really great. I'll be escorted by my two favorite men!" Mom says.

Dad and I look at each other, rolling our eyes.

"OK you two. Let's get our coats on and get out of here. One minute after four and your sister will be calling and wondering where we're at," my dad says to Mom.

As we pull into the driveway of my aunt's house, I can see my cousins in the front yard. It looks like a game of touch football, undoubtedly inspired by the games that are being broadcast on TV in the house. Aunt Marilyn meets us at the door, wearing her good dress and an apron wiping her hands on a small towel.

"Oh, hey there y'all! Happy Thanksgiving! Chick! Chick, come on in here and say hi!" she calls out to my uncle, who quickly appears with a beer in his hand.

"Hey, Slugger! How are ya? Jack, Shirley, Happy Thanksgiving to ya!" he greets us. I don't like being called "Slugger". It denotes sports, and at that age I wanted nothing to do with sports.

"Well alright you three. Come on in. Need a drink anyone? Beer, Jack? Shirley? Wine maybe? And I bet James would love some Pepsi? Am I right?" my aunt asks. We all simply nod in agreement. Its easier that way.

In the den, the men are all engrossed in a football game on TV, while the women were in the living room talking and catching up on the latest gossip. The kids were either outside or upstairs. I knew football was going on outside,

so I ventured upstairs and found my three nephews and niece in a large bedroom with a portable TV on, set to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade. Anything was better than football.

"Hey, you guys. Happy Thanksgiving," I say.

My youngest nephew, Matt, was three at the time. He got up off of the floor and ran straight for me at full force, hugging my waist. I bend down slightly and kiss his forehead.

"How's my Matty? Huh?" I ask him.

"I OK! Momma and Daddy are down there talking. They made us come up here," he tells me with a glowing smile. I ruffle his red hair.

"Yeah, dude. Threw us all out of there like we're babies. Making us babysit THIS little creepo," my oldest nephew says, nodding towards Matty. Michael is ten years old. Yes, a year younger than me. I was born much later than my sister. She was already married and out of the house when I was born, so Michael and I were only a year apart. He never called me "uncle". I wouldn't let him.

"I am NOT a creepo! Am I a creepo? Huh James am I a creepo? Tell him I'm not!" Matty said to me.

"You aren't a creepo, buddy. And even if you were, you'd be my special creepo. Got it?" I said with a wink and a smile. He nodded, satisfied and stuck his tongue out at Michael. Michael, in return flipped Matty the bird.

"Ooohhh!! James did you see what Mike did? He gave Matty the finger! He did it to me this morning," my niece, Sarah told me. She was eight years old, and tattletale would be an understatement.

"Yo, Mike. Don't do that. It's the holiday, dude. Be nice," I told him.

"Whatever," he said and went back to watching the parade.

We all sat on the floor, watching the parade for another hour. Every once in a while someone would comment on a character, or that they were getting hungry. I had to admit, I was hungry too. After yet another thirty minutes, my mom called up to us.

"Kids? Kids, come on down! Time for supper. Wash your hands, please!"

After I made sure they all washed up for supper, we gathered around the large dining

room table. I chose a seat.

"Uh, James? What are you doing?" Mom asked.

"I'm sitting down," I replied, slightly confused.

"No, darling. You are sitting over there. With the kids," she said, pointing at a folding table with a paper tablecloth and five place settings on it.

"Aw, Mom! No way! I'm 11-years-old. Please don't make me sit over there. Can't I sit with you guys? Please may I? I won't cause any problems. I'll be good," I begged.

"No honey. Aunt Marilyn already has the tables set. And she's getting ready to serve, so go on over there and take a seat. And make sure everyone at the table behaves. Got it?" she said.

"Yes. I got it," I said, feeling suddenly sad.

I walked over to the table and looked at it. It was much smaller in height than the big table, with folding chairs around it. At least it was set with the same good china and silverware as the big table. I picked a chair and sat down.

"OK, you guys. Sit on down. Aunt Marilyn will be bringing out the food soon. Napkins on your laps, too, please," I said. I got up and positioned Matty's chair close to the table so he wouldn't drop food on the floor, and sat back down.

After another two minutes, my aunt appeared with the turkey. I must say, it was a really beautiful bird! Had to have been 25

pounds easily. And cooked to perfection. I was trying to figure out which piece I wanted.

The food was served swiftly. The kids were all served slices of white meat, so it didn't matter what piece I wanted, along with a choice of mashed potatoes or yams, cranberry sauce and a choice of corn or green beans. The adults were served a nice white wine, and the kids, apple juice. My uncle tapped his spoon lightly on his wine glass to get everyone's attention and stood up.

"I just want to say that its really great having the family here for this Thanksgiving. It means so much to Marilyn and me for us all to be

together for this great occasion. And with that, please, everyone bow your heads. Heavenly Father, we thank thee for this wonderful meal you have provided from your bounty. Please bless those at this table

tonight, as well as those who are less fortunate. In Jesus' Name, amen."

We all replied, "Amen". We began eating this great meal. Although I wanted a drum stick, the white meat I was served was really great. As a matter of fact, everything was great. I was enjoying my meal and the kids were behaving perfectly. Suddenly, my aunt stood up and dashed from the room. Everyone was looking at each other, puzzled. She came back waving a cassette tape in her hand. She popped it in the stereo system and pressed the Play button.

"How could I forget the Christmas music?" she laughed.



My father, who complained loudly at every Thanksgiving dinner I could remember, did so again.

"Jesus. Marilyn, do we really need that for Thanksgiving? Christmas is more than a month away. What sense does it make?" he asked.

"Oh Jack! Thanksgiving dinner marks the beginning of the holiday season. So, I say why not? Everyone likes it, and it sets a nice mood", she said as Bing Crosby began singing "White Christmas".

My dad shook his head in exasperation. My mom leaned in to him.

"Please Jack. Let it be. Its her tradition, so let her enjoy it," she whispered.

All he did was sigh loudly and continue eating.

After we were all fed fat and happy, Aunt Marilyn, bless her, showed up with two pumpkin pies and whipped cream.

"You all still have a little room, I hope!" she cackled. My aunt didn't just laugh. It was a cackle which, when she did it, was infectious. My niece leaned in to talk to me.

"Aunt Marilyn cackles like a chicken," she said innocently.

Upon hearing that I immediately dissolved into howling laughter. Everyone was looking at me, wondering what could possibly have sparked this eruption.

"James. James, please settle! Nothing is THAT funny," Mom scolded. But I couldn't stop! My face was red and tears were flowing. Pretty soon, all of the kids were in tears of laughter.

"Hey. Hey! Stop that right now. This is not a birthday party," Dad said. But we couldn't stop. Soon, my brother and his wife were giggling, as well as my sister and brother-in-law.

"What the hell is going on here? Christmas music when its not even Christmas and you've all lost your minds at once!" Dad said. He wiped his mouth on his napkin and got up.

"Laugh if you want to. But Thanksgiving is a serious occasion. I'm going to the other room and watch some football. Anyone who sees fit to settle down is welcome to join me," he said and walked out.

We all stopped laughing and looked at each other for a few seconds, and then dissolved

into laughter again. And above all the laughter was my Aunt Marilyn's cackle.

We ended the evening with hugs and kisses all round, and we all gathered our coats so we could get back home. We all bid each other good night and Happy Thanksgiving and went to our cars. As me and my parents got into our car, Dad grunted.

"A laugh riot. I've never seen anything like it in all my years," he said, throwing me a dirty glance. I rolled my eyes and shrugged.

We were home in less than five minutes, and I couldn't wait to get upstairs and get out of my suit and into my comfortable PJs. As I loosened my tie, I thought back to what my young niece had said. She said if with such an innocence and honesty. I admired that. I went back downstairs to say good night to my parents, and went back up to lay down. I turned on the radio to the soft music station so lull me to sleep, as I had done every night of my life since I could turn on a radio. Falling asleep, I smiled, and giggled. Happy Thanksgiving.

The Light

Of Christmas

By Mattybl

It's warm inside
Lights and candles are lighting up our home,
Make it warm and cozy.
Outside it is dark
But also outside everywhere, little lights lead the way
Snow flakes are falling
Gently on the Christmas trees
There are lovely decorations everywhere
And inside it smells of cookies and Christmas

You make the dough
I show you how it's done, stand behind you and guide your hands
You laugh
Crumbs or flour are everywhere
We roll the dough
And I let you choose the cutters
Christmas trees, deer and stars
You may not know you are the greatest Christmas star of all
But I do what I can to let you know
Off the cookies go into the oven
The first are finished already
We coat them with sugar icing
And I watch you sprinkle glitter over them

While the cookies bake we sit on the sofa
It's snowing outside
Gently you snuggle onto me, we laugh
Soon you have to go to bed
Tonight it will not be easy for you to sleep
It's Christmas Eve tomorrow
I made beautiful presents for you
And I can't wait to see the joy in your eyes when you receive them
I can see it a bit already, it lights the world
It's the light of Christmas

How Are You

By FalseAlias

Yes, you, sat alone in the corner feeling sad,
Missing the world and the people you once had.
Yes, you, daydreaming without vision,
Hoping to ease into the world with this perversion.

I wish I could tell you how easy it is,
That your wants are the same as his.
I'm sorry to say that this just isn't true,
And deep down I think you already knew.

I hear you whisper, "What do I do?"
"That's your choice," I say to you,
Sir, Mr, Mrs, and Ma'am.
"But can you say 'I'm proud of who I am'?"

Fall down, get up, start over,
A story known as getting sober,
And your feelings, left alone, do this too,
But not without help coming back from you.

Go, explore, discover yourself.
If you need it, get help, fix your health.

And finally, I ask, "Really, how are you?"

Boys Trying To Impress

By *StrangeDays*

I was taking a ride on my bike and stopped off at this skate park for pit stop. I noticed this group of boys, 6 or 7 of them, talking to these young teenage girls. More like one or two of them, really. The more confident boys seemed to be doing all the talking while the others appeared to be giggling and laughing like little girls. So cute.

One of the more confident boys was really quite gorgeous, I could see what the girls were interested in! He had brown hair, blue eyes, and although he was a little short he was well proportioned. He had on a long floppy top that looked two sizes too big for him, and long-ish loose shiny green shorts too. I could see his beautiful caramel legs - tanned, thick set, fine blond hairs that were longer near his shins... The sort of boy legs I could look at all day!

I was sitting quite close to them, and I could hear everything they were saying. Some of the content was really quite mature for their age. One of the girls asked the cute confident boy, "are you a virgin?"

"You should ask my wife and 17 children." He replied. I even had to chuckle at that one.

There was another very cute boy in the pack too. He was more modest, and had a very cheeky smile. He was taller, with long blond hair, blue eyes, freckles, and a most beautiful behind. His cotton swim shorts showing his prefect curves.

Some of the things they were saying were a little rude, and they were swearing a bit. While I found some of what they were saying a little inappropriate, I also found it somehow stimulating. They were just trying to impress each other.

There was definitely sexual tension in the air, between the girls and boys, between the

boys and the boys, and between the girls and the girls. Their hormones, no doubt, starting to circulate. Perhaps making them feel things they've never felt before, their wants and hidden desires now starting to express themselves like they've seen the older kids do.

To my joy, both cute boys then came and stood right next to me. I could almost touch them. I was sitting some steps lower than them, and could look up at their beautiful slender caramel legs. I could see individual blond hairs, and the perfectness of their smooth white skin up through their shorts.

These boys just could not keep still, moving this way and that way. The shorter cute boy then lifted his top up to show his super smooth white muscular stomach. Wow, he was just so gorgeous! I'm not sure he realised he was even doing it. He held it up as he was talking, then one of his friends poked him in the stomach. "He beat me too it!" I thought to myself.

Everyone thought that was hilarious. The boys were like peacocks in a feather parade. They were definitely putting on a show for these young girls, or for each other, or for me (you never know). Considering how close I was sitting to them, they didn't seem bothered by me being there. They were certainly not inhibited. It was just a wonderful performance.

The father of one of the boys came over and said they had to go. "Still daddy's boys." I think to myself. I felt lucky that I got to experience this brief moment in time with them all, like a fly on the wall. I appreciated everything about them, their minds, their bodies, and their fun loving spirits, and, of course, their beautiful legs!



BOY Next Door

Part 1

By Zoomzoom4

How does a boylover usually meet a boy? There is no typical way. So much depends on timing, place, and circumstance. In other words: luck.

One of the most common ways for a BL and a boy to find each other is by living close. Being neighbors opens to the door to frequently crossing paths, familiarity, and opportunities to strike up conversation.

I am one of those who has met a young friend this way. I was not at all expecting it, planning it, hoping for it, or anything. It just happened so easily and so naturally that it was truly like a whirlwind. Yes, I know it sounds cliché, but that's how it felt.

We were drawn to each other instantly, and inseparable after that. If you asked either of us why we were friends, or why we were always together, neither of us would have an answer. We didn't need an explanation. We were friends, and that was all there was to it.

I remember when I first saw him. I believed he might have been 9, but if he asked me to guess his age I probably would have said 11. This is partially because of the little boost that boys his age always want.

It turned out that he was 10. I found this out in a funny way, not having to ask him. At his home, his mom had a wall of pictures of individual family members, with the date of birth on each picture. That's how I discovered we shared the same birthday, September 16th. "Different year, of course," as I said to his mom.

I was 27. I like how we never asked for each other's age. He found out my age only when his dad asked how old I was. It was as if we didn't want to acknowledge an age difference, because that was something that would potentially separate us. We wanted to find things to bring us together. And reasons for

us to get together.

It is an amazing feeling when a boy seems very tuned to you and your feelings of wanting to spend as much time with him as possible. Seeing him eagerly seek you out and want to be in your company as much as he can gives a boylover the most satisfied feeling of contentment, as if all is well in the world. You have a boy, and nothing is more wonderful than the affection you and him share.

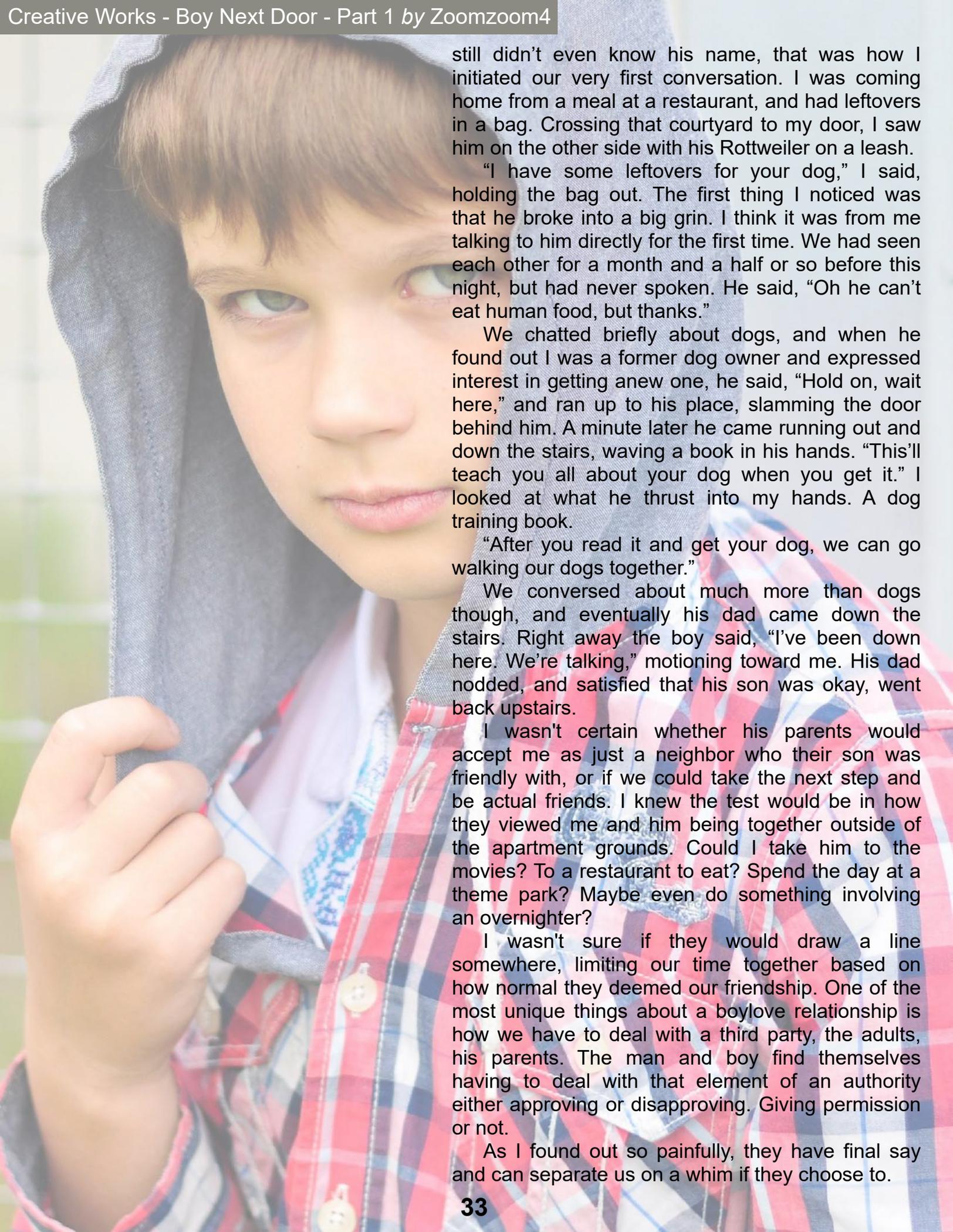
Early on, it was magical. By necessity I'd have to cross the paved path through the courtyard of the apartment grounds to get to my car. I'd see him there at the other end with his little sister, standing at his scooter as I approached. I heard her say, "Mike..." while pointing to me subtly as I approached, as if say, "Here comes your friend."

Sometimes it would take an hour before I reached my car. Why? Because he'd ride his razor scooter up to me and meet me in the pathway to talk, and talk we did. More times than was possible to count, I would be late to something. It goes without saying that I was happy to be, because time with him was golden and worth far more than any time with anyone else.

Even with nothing to talk about, he would find something. I'll never forget that rather than riding off to something else on his scooter, and knowing that I said I had somewhere to be, he would still intentionally keep me there talking. "I spilled ink on my hand in class today," showing me the ink stain between his thumb and forefinger.

What we initially shared was a love of dogs. That is how I first spoke to him directly, breaking the ice and introducing myself. When I





still didn't even know his name, that was how I initiated our very first conversation. I was coming home from a meal at a restaurant, and had leftovers in a bag. Crossing that courtyard to my door, I saw him on the other side with his Rottweiler on a leash.

"I have some leftovers for your dog," I said, holding the bag out. The first thing I noticed was that he broke into a big grin. I think it was from me talking to him directly for the first time. We had seen each other for a month and a half or so before this night, but had never spoken. He said, "Oh he can't eat human food, but thanks."

We chatted briefly about dogs, and when he found out I was a former dog owner and expressed interest in getting anew one, he said, "Hold on, wait here," and ran up to his place, slamming the door behind him. A minute later he came running out and down the stairs, waving a book in his hands. "This'll teach you all about your dog when you get it." I looked at what he thrust into my hands. A dog training book.

"After you read it and get your dog, we can go walking our dogs together."

We conversed about much more than dogs though, and eventually his dad came down the stairs. Right away the boy said, "I've been down here. We're talking," motioning toward me. His dad nodded, and satisfied that his son was okay, went back upstairs.

I wasn't certain whether his parents would accept me as just a neighbor who their son was friendly with, or if we could take the next step and be actual friends. I knew the test would be in how they viewed me and him being together outside of the apartment grounds. Could I take him to the movies? To a restaurant to eat? Spend the day at a theme park? Maybe even do something involving an overnighter?

I wasn't sure if they would draw a line somewhere, limiting our time together based on how normal they deemed our friendship. One of the most unique things about a boylove relationship is how we have to deal with a third party, the adults, his parents. The man and boy find themselves having to deal with that element of an authority either approving or disapproving. Giving permission or not.

As I found out so painfully, they have final say and can separate us on a whim if they choose to.

Erinnerungen ein Boylover zu Sein

Note: This submission is the German version of "Memories of being a boylover" by BlueEagle12 released in Ethos 8. There may be inconsistencies between this and the English version.

By BlueEagle12

Wer bin ich und wie alt bin ich?
Mein Name ist blueeagle12 und ich wurde 1967 geboren.
Seit wann weiß ich, dass ich ein Boylover bin?

Als Kind wusste ich immer schon, dass ich irgendwie anders bin als die anderen Jungs.

Zuerst, als ich ca. 5/6 Jahre alt war, war ich an Mädchen interessiert. Aber hauptsächlich, weil ich gehört habe, dass Männer nur Frauen mögen. Da waren schon einige hübsche Mädchen in unserem Kindergarten. Ich sang ihnen Lieder und erinnere mich, dass ich sie auch ab und zu versuchte zu küssen.

Als ich älter wurde, hatte ich eine Freundin und wenn ich so zurück blicke, dann erinnere ich mich, dass sie (und diejenigen nach ihr) eher wie Jungs aussahen als ein Mädchen.

Bei einem Ferienausflug in die Niederlande, als ich so in etwa 12/13 war, war ich mit ihr zusammen in einer Gruppe und wir hatten sehr viel Spaß dort. Die Anderen lachten mich aus, wenn ich Ihre poetische Lieder sang, die ich selbst geschrieben hatte.

Aber in dieser Zeit war auch das erst Mal, dass ich einen Jungen attraktiv fand.

Er war in einer anderen Gruppe, hatte blondes Haar und so ein liebliches Gesicht. Ich war total durcheinander und war ein wenig

verängstigt, als ich bemerkte, dass er immer wieder in meinen Träumen vorkam und ich auch tagsüber an ihn denken musste. Ich konnte nicht aufhören, ihn anzusehen und versuchte, ihm so nahe wie möglich zu sein.

Ich weiß nicht, ob er meine Gefühle bemerkte, aber ich erinnerte mich noch eine sehr lange Zeit an ihn. Noch heute sehe ich sein Lächeln.

Meine Beziehung zu meiner Freundin endete einige Monate später und ohne genau zu merken wann genau, sah ich immer mehr nach Jungs.

Hatte ich engeren Kontakt zu Jungs als ich ein Teenager war?

Ja! Es gab einige sehr niedliche Jungs in meiner Nachbarschaft und einige von ihnen waren gerne in meiner Nähe. Sie mochten es, mit mir zu spielen und einige wurden enge Freunde.

Da gab es den ersten kleinen Kuss, die erste Berührung eines Knies eines Jungen und ein wenig mehr.

Meine ich damit, dass ich als Teenager sexuellen Kontakt zu Jungs hatte?

Keinen sexuellen Kontakt so wie ihn manch einer verstehen könnte, aber ich kam ein paar Jungs sehr nahe und wir entdeckten einige unserer Gefühle miteinander.

Was dachten meine anderen Freunde damals über mich?

Ich hatte während dieser Zeit nicht viele Freunde. Ich war eines von diesen Kindern,

das man gerne die ganze Schulzeit tyrannisierte und keiner wollte mit mir spielen.

Also war die Liebe zu Jungs ein Ausweg für mich?

Nein, anfangs wusste ich nicht mit diesen Gefühlen umzugehen und das machte mich sehr unsicher. Ich versuchte die Blicke auf Jungs zu verbergen und Freundinnen zu finden, nur um meine "Homo-Gefühle" zu verstecken.

Dachte ich, dass ich schwul bin?

Irgendwie schon. Aber für mich war "schwul sein" die Liebe zwischen zwei Männern und nicht zwischen Jungs. Ich war nie an Männern interessiert. Nicht als Junge und auch Heute nicht. Ich habe nicht ganz verstanden, was für Gefühle in mir drinnrn waren. Ich musste sie daheim, in der Schule, wenn ich mit Freunden zusammen war und überall, wo ich sonst noch war, verstecken.

Wie ging ich damit um, ein Boylover zu sein?

Das war nicht einfach! Als ich jung war, gab es noch kein Internet und ich kannte keine anderen Menschen, die so waren wie ich. Ich wusste nicht einmal, dass es einen Begriff für meine Gefühle gab. Boylover - ein einfaches Wort für so eine große Emotion. Ich hatte zu sehr vielen Jungs Kontakt und meine Eltern haben das ganz sicher bemerkt.

Als nach der Schule die Zeit kam sich über den Beruf Gedanken zu machen, wollte ich Lehrer, Kindergärtner oder Mitarbeiter in einem Kinderheim werden oder so etwas ähnliches.

Meine Eltern erlaubten es nicht und so wurde ich ein Kaufmann.

Gab ich den Kontakt zu den Jungs auf?

Nein! Ganz im Gegenteil!. Ich hatte sehr viel Kontakte zu Jungs, weil ich viel schwimmen ging und hatte einige Freunde auf dem britischen Armeestützpunkt, der in der Nähe unserer Stadt lag.

Außerdem war ich für eine sehr lange Zeit Fußballtrainer.

Ich ging mit den Jungs schwimmen, nahm sie mit in die Eishalle oder wir spielten einfach etwas im Wald.

Außerdem arbeitete ich auch als Babysitter für eine Bekannte. Sie hatte einen spanischen

Ehemann und somit hatte ich den ersten Kontakt zur spanischen Sprache außerhalb unserer Ferienzeiten in Spanien.

Und es war kein Problem, so nah bei einem kleinen Jungen zu sein?

Es war ein großes Problem und es wäre beinahe ein noch viel größeres Problem für mich geworden.

Ich war regelrecht verknallt in den kleinen Jungen, den ich seit er ein kleines Baby war kannte. Als er so etwa 5 oder 6 war, küsste ich ihn ab und zu auf den Mund und er liebte das - und auf meinem Schoß zu sitzen.

Dann kam die Zeit, als ich versuchte ihm einen Zungenkuss zu geben. Er mochte das sehr und so küssten wir uns oft ganz heimlich mit einem Zungenkuss. Einmal sah uns sein kleiner Bruder küssen und erzählte es seinen Eltern.

Sie riefen meine Eltern mitten in der Nacht an und ich hatte ein sehr langes Gespräch mit den Eltern des Jungen.

Was haben sie mit mir gemacht? Gab es Probleme mit meinen Eltern?

Ich sprach sehr lange mit den Eltern des Jungen und nach einer langen Zeit erzählte ich ihnen, dass ich mich zu Jungs mehr hingezogen fühlte als zu Mädchen und noch mehr zu den jüngeren Jungs, die Mutter des Jungen zeigte sich bestürzt und sein Vater auch.

Wir erzählten meinen Eltern nichts von dem Gespräch. Wir sagten ihnen nur, dass der kleine Bruder versuchte mich in Schwierigkeiten zu bringen, weil er eifersüchtig war.

Und danach hörte ich auf, Jungen so nahe zu kommen?

Nein! Ich hatte noch einige sehr enge Momente mit ein paar anderen Jungs, aber ich machte nie etwas, womit sie nicht einverstanden waren.

Ich lernte außerdem zu verstehen, dass Jungs einen anderen Blickwinkel haben, wenn sie sich mit Älteren näher kommen. Ein kleiner Junge will anders geliebt werden als ein Teenager.

Ein kleiner Junge küsst dich und lächelt in die Kamera, wenn du ein Foto von ihm machen

willst. Er sitzt auf deinem Schoß und umarmt dich auf eine ganz besonders süße Art und Weise. Er würde fast alles tun, was du von ihm willst, solange du ihm seine Zuneigung zeigst.

Ein Teenager verliert mit der Zeit normalerweise mehr und mehr diese Gefühle. Okay, einige mögen es immernoch wenn sie älter werden, und Einige bemerken, dass sie schwul sind und vielleicht mögen sie noch engere Beziehungen als Andere.

Wann immer ich einen kleinen Boyfriend hatte, versuchte ich mehr eine Mischung aus Vater und Bruder zu sein wie als "Boylover".

Ich kam ihnen nie zu nahe?

Vielleicht kam ich ein paarmal sehr nahe. Es hängt von der Sicht des Betrachters ab. Für einige hat es schon etwas von "Sex mit einem Jungen", wenn man ihm nur einen kleinen Kuss gibt und für Andere ist es kein Problem, wenn man mit ihnen zusammen duscht und die Kinder bei einem im selben Bett schlafen.

Hat sich meine Art Jungs anzusehen mit der Zeit geändert?

Ja, sehr sogar! Wenn ich einen Jungen

ansah, als ich ein Teenager oder junger Mann war, wünschte ich mir oft, ihn nackt zu sehen oder ihn sehr lange auf meinem Schoß zu haben. Ich wünschte mir, sie zu umarmen, sie zu küssen und dass sie niemals älter werden sollten.

Heute, nach vielen Jahren, hat sich meine Art einen Jungen anzusehen geändert. Ich liebe es immer noch, die Augen eines Jungen zu sehen, sein Lächeln, sein Haar und seine Figur. Das hat sich nicht geändert.

Aber heutzutage sehe ich in Gedanken nicht einen Jungen nicht in Unterhose, wenn er vor mir steht. Ich will ihn nicht die ganze Zeit umarmen, ich ziehe es vor, mit ihm viel Zeit zu verbringen.

Es genügt mir, einen Jungen lachen zu sehen, sein Lächeln anzuschauen und ihm vielleicht beim Sport zuzusehen.

Wie hat sich mein Blickwinkel verändert?

Ich weiß es nicht! Vielleicht, weil ich seit fast 10 Jahren mit dem selben Boyfriend zusammen bin. Er weiß, wie ich ihn sehe und



auf welche Art und Weise ich ihn liebe. Er weiß, dass ich ein Boylover bin. Ich habe ihm Alles erzählt. Ich war mir sicher, dass er mich verstand und er enttäuschte mich nicht darin.

Wie so viele Boyfriend eines Boylovers ist er ein Scheidungskind. Ich war die einzige Person, der er vertraute und die immer an seiner Seite war, wenn er Probleme hatte oder traurig war.

Ohne jegliche Gegenleistung, Nichts hat sich bis heute geändert und er ist noch immer ein sehr enger Freund, aber ohne die vielen Küsse oder langen Umarmungen.

Und ich hatte keinen sexuellen Kontakt zu diesem Jungen?

Das hängt davon ab, was die Leute unter "Sex miteinander haben" verstehen. Wir kamen uns natürlich sehr nahe.

Was habe ich heute zu diesem und zu andern Jungen für eine Beziehung?

Heute ist mein "BF" 18 Jahre alt und er ist ein sehr gut aussehender junger Mann. Ich hole ihn nach wie vor zweimal die Woche ab um mit ihm zusammen Zeit zu verbringen. Ich koche und wir schauen TV oder er macht seine Hausaufgaben bei mir.

Gebe ich ihm Geld dafür, mit mir Zeit zu verbringen?

Nein! Für mich ist er wie ein eigener Sohn. Natürlich gebe ich für seinen Geburtstag oder für Weihnachtsgeschenke eine Menge Geld aus. Aber hauptsächlich, weil seine Mutter (wo er nach wie vor lebt) ihm kaum soviel Geld gibt so wie es andere Eltern tun. Sie ist Alkoholikerin und auch sehr geizig.

Ich habe auch einen kleinen Boyfriend seit etwa einem Jahr, der mich so einmal im Monat besuchen kommt.

Er ist eines dieser Kinder, die versuchen dich heimlich zu küssen oder auf dem Schoß sitzen wollen. Er hat kein Problem damit, in meinem Bad zu duschen und vorher nackt durch meine Wohnung zu hüpfen oder mit meinem Hund zu spielen.

Da ist kein Wunsch, ihn zu berühren, kein Wunsch, ihn zu küssen oder mehr. Ich umarme ihn häufig und genieße jeden Moment, wenn er neben mir auf dem Sofa liegt.

Und diese Nähe zu ihm ist heimlich vor seinen Eltern?

Nein! Sie wissen es und haben es gesehen, als er auf meinen Schoß sprang. Er erzählte ihnen, dass er mich heiraten will, wenn er 18 ist, denn Männer dürfen ja jetzt Männer heiraten. (Die Zeit wird kommen, mein kleiner Freund, und ich bin sicher, du änderst deine Meinung)

Die Eltern des Jungen waren es auch, die mich fragten, ob er nach dem Schulsport bei mir duschen könnte, wenn ich ihn ab und zu von der Schule abhole. Und ich solle mich nicht wundern,



wenn nackt durch meine Wohnung läuft.

Was mache ich, wenn die Gefühle in mir hoch kommen, einen Jungen mehr als nur umarmen zu wollen?

Ich habe eine ungewöhnliche Methode für mich selbst gefunden. Wenn solch ein Moment kommt, versuche ich einige Dinge an dem Jungen (der bei mir ist) zu sehen, die mir nicht gefallen. Z.B. manchmal der Mundgeruch (viele Jungs haben oft argen Mundgeruch finde ich). Oder ich versuche mir den Jungen ein paar Jahre älter vorzustellen. Dann weiß ich, dass er nicht mehr so süß aussieht und seine Gesichtszüge sich verändert haben. Ich versuche ihn mir als jungen Mann mit einem Bart vorzustellen und dann, von einem auf den anderen Moment, sind meine Wünsche verschwunden.

Und das hilft?

Ja, mir hilft es. Aber ich glaube nicht, dass es bei Anderen helfen wird. Jeder ist ein Unikat.

Was ist mein Rat für die anderen, jüngeren Boylover?

Zuerst, versucht die Gefühle eines Jungen zu sehen und zu verstehen, die er hat. Wenn er sagt, dass er dich liebt, dann meint er es auf eine andere Weise als man die Worte verstehen mag. Ein kleiner Junge denkt normalerweise nicht auf sexuelle Art und Weise. Versucht nicht, einen Jungen so zu lenken wie ihr ihn haben wollt. Respektiert seine eigene Meinung und seine Gefühle.

Kinder wollen immer den Erwachsenen gefallen und machen dann Dinge, die sie sonst nicht machen möchten.

Wenn man keine wirklichen Freunde hat, mit denen man über seine tiefsten Gefühle reden kann, kann es helfen, diese aufzuschreiben oder für sich selbst aufzunehmen. Manchmal findet man über ein BL-Forum Freundschaften, aber man muss sehr vorsichtig sein, schnell Leute treffen zu wollen.

Ich war für eine sehr lange Zeit sehr krank und während dieser Zeit hatte ich sehr große Depressionen. Ich hatte eine Menge Suizidgedanken und Zeit mit meinem Boyfriend zu verbringen half mir durch diese Zeit

hindurch. Er half mir, ohne es zu merken. Nachdem ich wieder gesund war, wechselte ich meinen Job und adoptierte einen kleinen Hund. Viele Dinge änderten sich in meinem Leben.

Mein Hund gibt mir eine andere, aber sehr spezielle Art der Zuneigung. Er liebt mich, egal wie ich aussehe oder ob ich dick bin oder nicht. Er liebt mich, egal ob ich in Panik bin oder schlafe. Es interessiert ihn nicht, was für sexuelle Gefühle ich habe (okay, er kennt keine sexuellen Gefühle von Menschen).

Ich bin ein sehr sentimentaler und emotionaler Mensch mit spanischen Wurzeln. Mir hilft es, wenn ich für mich selbst singen kann, um eine Emotionen zu bewältigen. Manchmal schreibe ich kleine Poesie. Andere dagegen mögen laute Musik oder treiben Sport.

Alles das kann einem Momente geben, über seine Gefühle nachzudenken und geben einem die Chance den richtigen Weg zu finden, mit seinen Emotionen umzugehen.

Ich mag es immer noch, Jungs anzusehen. Wie sie aussehen und wie sie sich bewegen. Ich mag es, ihre wunderschönen Augen zu sehen, ihre lieblichen Lippen, ihre Körper und ihre Engelslöckchen, wenn sie welche haben.

Wir Alle waren einmal Kinder und es mag Männer gegeben haben, die mehr in uns gesehen haben als nur einen kleinen süßen Jungen.

Es liegt an uns, den anderen Leuten zu zeigen, dass Boylover nicht das "Sex-Monster" sind.

Kinder werden erwachsen und die Zeit der Kindheit ist die kürzeste Zeit in ihrem Leben. Darum ist es umso wichtiger, ihnen ein Vorbild und Mentor zu sein und ihnen zu zeigen, ein guter Mann oder eine gute Frau zu werden.

Wenn wir dies mit Sorgfalt, Liebe und Respekt für das Kind tun, besteht vielleicht eines Tages die Chance, die Vorurteile ein Pädophiler zu sein, zu ändern.

Aber mein größter Rat ist - akzeptiere, wie du bist und wer du bist.

just be12

(geschrieben von blueeagle12 /28.01.2018)

Interview

with RyanJames

420Guy: What was your first exposure to the boylove/childlove community, and what was your initial reaction?

RyanJames: The first time I think I was exposed to "boylovers" was when I was round 15/16 and I found the AOL chatrooms where men were seeking boys or boys were seeking men. I think that is when I realized that I had a sexual attraction to young boys. From there, I think I found IRC after that, when the AOL chats were getting shut down. I don't think I found the actual "community" until I was around 17/18 with BoyChat. As far as initial reaction, when in the AOL chats, I actually thought I was a monster, you know, because it was a time when a "pedophile" was nothing more than a child molester. When I finally did find BoyChat, I realized that boylovers were not all the monsters that people make them out to be.

420Guy: You currently own and run world-unity.net. Why did you decide to start the website, and what has been the biggest challenge?

RyanJames: My main reasoning for wanting to start World Unity was to create something different and unique for the childlove community. There were/are many boylove boards, a few girlove boards, and even less childlove boards. I was honestly getting bored with "the same old forum" format, so wanted to create a new "unique" user experience for the community. I also wanted to create a community united, where boylovers, girlovers, childlovers, and everyone in between could come and socialize and be one big community, because that is what we all are.

The biggest challenge I think for me has been having people embrace the new format. I have learned that many of us in the community

By 420Guy

are not very big on change.

420Guy: You've been involved in a number of BL-related projects, including radio, and Modern Boylover Magazine itself. Which project, past or present, did you enjoy being a part of the most?

RyanJames: WOW, that is actually a tough one to answer. If I really truly had to pick one project that I have enjoyed being a part of the most, I would have to pick KBLR/WURN. I have always enjoyed doing my live shows, and even though I don't do as many as I should be doing, I always try to make them the best shows that I can.

420Guy: What can one expect when listeners tune into World Unity Radio Network? Is it similar to 'SQR'?

RyanJames: When one listens to World Unity Radio, they would get to listen to a variety of music, everything from boy artists, to girl artists, to rock, hip hop, pop, just about anything really. When there are live DJs, each would have their own "theme" that they usually like to play.

As far as it being similar to 'SQR', SQR was actually the inspiration for World Unity Radio Network. The only difference is there is currently a lack of DJs

420Guy: Are you looking for DJs? How would someone inquire if they were interested?

RyanJames: The simple answer is yes, and anyone interested in potentially being a DJ can email me personally at RyanJames@world-unity.net

420Guy: You are currently with an adult partner, do they know about your minor

attractions?

RyanJames: Yes, my partner does know about my attractions, and in actuality, he shares the same attractions, though he prefers teens, where I am more partial to the tweens.

420Guy: Has being in a relationship with a fellow BL made it easier to cope with your attractions? How did you guys meet?

RyanJames: For me, yes it actually has helped me to cope with my attractions. Luckily I have been blessed with having not only an attraction to young boys, but adult males as well.

As far as us meeting, I will have to say Nunya...

420Guy: What sort of activities did you enjoy as a boy? Are there any that you still enjoy today?

RyanJames: As a boy, I enjoyed just about anything that I was allowed to do. I did a lot of swimming, playing video games, hanging out with friends, using my imagination etc. I was also a computer nerd and bookworm pretty much all my life. I still pretty much enjoy everything that I did as a boy today, with a lot more hobbies as well. The only thing I really don't do as much as I used to is read books.

420Guy: When did you first begin to explore your sexuality? Did you 'fool around' with other boys, or was it 'self-taught' exploration? Enquiring perverts want to know!

RyanJames: Well I started masturbating around the age of 11/12, sadly I did not "fool around" with other boys until I was in high school(the boys were in middle). As I was a bookworm, I would actually read books on the human body, puberty, etc. I didn't lose my virginity until I was 19 years old. He was in his 40s, and a pedo I met online.

420Guy: Do you think you would have benefited from having an AF in those tween years? What about a sexual relationship?

RyanJames: In all honesty, I do not know the answer to that question. Don't know if I would of benefited but I think that I would of liked to have an AF, and be physical with him.

420Guy: When did you first realize that you had attractions to younger boys? How did you cope with it at the time?

RyanJames: I think I first truly realized I had an attraction to younger boys was when I was around 15/16 years old. I really hated myself for having the attraction, I thought I was a monster and a child molester because I had the attraction. I felt this way for a couple years, until I found BoyChat and eventually BoyMoment(s) and learned that not all pedophiles (boylovers) are monsters.

420Guy: Things seem slow in the community these days, at least compared to times that you and I have seen. Do you have any theories on why this is? Is there anything the community can do to make things more interesting and active?

RyanJames: I think that a lot of the old blood is gone from the community, either dead, staying under the radar or in prison. The last 15 years have been really tough for the community, with laws and punishments getting more and more extreme. I think a lot of the new blood is just truly scared to get involved in the community.

I have noticed that there is also quite a bit of "competition" in the community, with different boards doing anything and everything to "one up" all the other boards. As far as what we can do to make things interesting and active, first and foremost, work together. We are all one community, and we need to start acting like it.

Another thing is mix things up, do things a bit different, do something new, unique. And one last thing, embrace new members joining the boards/sites. Don't lock your site down so that the only people who can join is people who already know somebody in the community. Bring new blood in and welcome them with open arms.

420Guy: What do you find most attractive about a boy?

RyanJames: Now that is almost an impossible question to answer. If I had to say something though, it would have to be his personality and his innocence. I am always willing to look past a boys looks in favor of an amazing personality. Now when looking at a photo where I cannot discern his personality, I am immediately drawn to his eyes.

420Guy: Where do you stand on activism?

Is it all about age-of-consent laws, or education? What sort of future do you see for Minor-Attracted-Persons?

RyanJames: I think first and foremost, there needs to be education. We need to show society that we are not all just out there hiding in the bushes in nothing but a trenchcoat offering little kids candy, show them we are not all like what is portrayed on television and the media.

As far as our future, I can see things going the way they did for other minorities, such as African-Americans in the 50s and 60s, and the LGBTQ community in the 80s and 90s. It may not be in our lifetime, but I think if we can educate this generation things will improve for future generations. Like Whitney Houston sang in "The Greatest Love", 'I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way.'

420Guy: How do we educate people? Especially when the worst-case scenario is always what's covered by the media, and engraved in peoples minds?

RyanJames: Hmmmm, Part of the education is showing that what they see on TV is not the only truth. Citing peer studies that show that not all "pedos" are child molesters. Also, the ones of us that do have YFs, and have had them for a while, come out to the parents, and explain to them the differences between you and what is seen on TV.

The biggest problem with society is the word pedophile is associated with child molester. Teach people that phile is latin for love of, and pedo is child. So basically a pedophile is a person who literally has love for a child. A child molester cannot love a child, because they hurt children, and you do not hurt ones you love.

420Guy: There are a couple topics about Altcoins on your site. Have you had any luck with the crypto-currency world?

RyanJames: Sadly, no I have not had any luck... I do have a few coins that seem promising that I am holding to see what happens.

420Guy: One word: Pedocoin?

RyanJames: Pedocoin was something that

I thought about creating, even as a joke, maybe to use it as a sort of reward for reaching certain milestones on the website(s). Eventually possibly adding it to some kind of exchange and possibly making it worth something, and use it as a form of trade for like memberships to some sites, or where members can make donations to the website using said coins.

420Guy: An opportunity arises to reside in an all-childlover country. Would you move there? Are there any specific rules that you would expect from such a land?

RyanJames: That is a good question. I don't think I would like to move to a country that was all-childlover. To me I see that as a form of Isolation. Childlovers would be isolating themselves from the rest of the world and society... which is something I disagree with. Now, if you mean a country where childlove wasn't demonized as it is now, then yes I think I would, as long as it wasn't just for only childlovers. Basically, if there was a country where a loving consensual relationship between two persons no matter the age was legal, yes I Would.

Chocolate Milk

By Princess Velcro

Jamie's back straightened as the front door opened, then her face relaxed into a smile when she saw who it was. As usual the blue eyed, black haired boy didn't smile back and then his face was blocked by a short, middle aged woman with a face Jamie was sure had never been happy.

The woman held a large phone in her hand and was angrily pressing buttons as she walked in front of the boy and to the wide podium Jamie stood behind. It took a her a moment to look up from her phone, and by then Jamie's smile was completely gone, replaced by the polite expression she reserved for potentially difficult "guests".

"Welcome to-" Jamie started but was cut off.

"Yeah. Yeah. We want a booth." The woman gestured behind herself with her free hand to include the boy in her "we".

"Of course." Jamie's voice was as polite as her expression as she grabbed an adult menu and a child's one. "Right this way."

She stepped out from behind the podium and straight to her section, glad she had agreed to fill in for Marie while the hostess used the restroom.

She stopped at a booth and gestured to it. "Here you are." She waited until both the woman and the boy were seated before sliding the appropriate menus down in front of each. She then pulled out several packets of crayons, each a set, and laid two down in front of the boy, making sure none of the four crayons were red. He hated red crayons, always hiding them under his napkin.

"My name is Jamie and I'll be your server. If you need anything please don't hesitate to

ask." She said, but the woman had already returned to angrily pressing buttons on her phone and the boy was opening the first of the two packets, shaking the crayons on to the table.

Jamie stood there for a heartbeat more then politely said "I shall give you a few minutes to look over the menu and then I shall be back." Not waiting for a response, she turned and walked back to the podium. Once there, she forced herself not to stare in the direction of the booth, just out of sight from where she stood and, by the time Marie returned from the restroom, Jamie was practically pacing behind the podium.

"I see your special guest came in." Marie's teasing voice stopped Jamie mid-pace and she spun towards the younger woman.

"There you are." Jamie's voice was full of relief as she tried to scoot behind Marie.

"Oh, no you don't." Marie caught her arm, more playfully than forcefully. "I know you want to get back to your special guest, but you promised last time you'd tell me why you are so obsessed with him."

Jamie, not willing to wrest her arm from Marie's light grasp, gave a small sigh. "I'm not obsessed with him, okay? I told you that last time." Marie's expression wasn't convinced, so Jamie continued. "He's just so... sad. And he keeps coming in with all these different people. I don't think I've seen him come in with the same person more than three times. How is that healthy for an 8-year-old?"

She didn't exactly know he was 8. Last month she had seen him holding a card with the words, "HAPPY 8th BIRTHDAY!"

emblazoned on it. When he saw she had seen it, he quickly squirreled it away in his jacket, his face turning slightly red.

“And everyone he comes in with is so...” Jamie grasped for a word before landing on, “mean. They don’t even call him by name.” This Jamie regretted the most, not knowing his name. Last visit she had asked him his name, but he had just continued coloring, not answering her. Jamie had glanced at the man with him, one perhaps a bit older than Jamie herself, but he didn’t offer it either, just sipped his coffee in silence.

Marie let go of Jamie’s arm. “They can’t be that mean. They are bringing him to a restaurant. And probably one of his choice.” Marie leaned in closer. “Perhaps he’s as obsessed with you as you are of him.”

Jamie made a face at Marie’s teasing tone. “I’m not obsessed with him. Now, if you’ll excuse me, oh hostess, I have a job to do.”

Marie let her pass easily, saying, “Don’t forget his chocolate milk.” As if she would. It didn’t occur to her that this reminder from Marie meant that the other girl remembered what the boy liked, as well. And she wasn’t even a server.

On her way to the kitchen, Jamie passed by the booth, noticing the woman was still pressing buttons, though now the phone lay flat on the table, on top of the menu she was supposed to be perusing. A few moments later Jamie returned to the booth, carrying a small, brightly colored plastic cup with a lid. She set it, along with a bendy straw, down in front of the black haired boy.

Before she could ask if they were ready to order, the woman’s head snapped up. “What is that? We didn’t order any drinks yet. We didn’t order anything yet.”

This had happened a few times before, and perhaps Jamie might avoid it if she waited until after they had ordered, but the happiest Jamie had ever seen him was when he was sipping his chocolate milk, as he was now. Luckily, she knew her answer by heart now.

“It comes free with the meal. I find it easier to bring it first, so it’s not forgotten among the rest of the order.” Her answer, while false, was

polite and matter of fact. Jamie wouldn’t get in trouble for comping a chocolate milk here and there. And the explanation worked, the woman settled down.

“Are you ready to order now?” Jamie asked.

“Uh, no. I haven’t even looked at the menu yet.” The woman pushed her phone off of her menu and picked it up. Finally.

“How about something to drink then?”

It took returning to the table twice before the woman was ready to order. She pointed at the menu as she made several substitutions. When she was done, Jamie turned to the boy who, as usual, slid his children’s menu over to her, his selections circled in blue.

She jotted down his selections, and made her way back to the kitchen.

When, twenty minutes later, Jamie approached their booth with their food, the woman was just answering her phone. Jamie listened as she slowly set their plates down.

“Hello, Edgar? Ian? He’s here with me.” The boy looked up at that, and Jamie’s heart gave a jump. His name was Ian!

“What do you mean, they won’t take him? Why not?” The woman’s voice turned angry, and Jamie noticed Ian hunch in on himself. Why would she talk about this in front of the boy? Couldn’t she see what her words were doing to him? Jamie had to force her fists not to clench.

“Well, I don’t want him either.” Really? Really? Jamie’s temper started to rise. How dare she. How dare she. “This is your job, Edgar. Can’t you find someone who wants him?”

“I want him.” Jamie couldn’t believe the words had just come out of her mouth. The woman ignored her, still listening to the loud male voice on the phone. Ian had heard her though. By now he was practically a human ball on the booth’s bench, but his head popped up at her words, his blue eyes getting wide. She couldn’t back down now.

Jamie cleared her throat and her voice got louder. “I want him.” She was surprised by how forceful her voice sounded.

“What?” The woman looked over at Jamie.

“Edgar, hold on.” she said into the phone before addressing Jamie. “What was that.”

For the third time Jamie said “I want him.” Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Ian relax, his body no longer in a protective ball.

The woman scoffed. “He’s more trouble than he’s worth, girl.” She started to wave a dismissive hand at Jamie but Jamie stood firm.

“I don’t care. You don’t want him. These other people don’t want him. You just asked this Edgar to find someone who wanted him. That’s me. I do.”

The woman’s eyes narrowed. “I assure you, you won’t get much money for him.”

Money? Why would she get money? What had she gotten herself into? Did they think she wanted to sell him?

“I don’t care. I want him. Not money.” Why would she sell him? What kind of barbarians were these people?

“Are you a registered foster parent?”

Oh. Foster parent. Everything clicked in her head. So many obvious things made sense. He was in the foster care system.

“I am not, but I can become one.” How? She knew nothing about foster care. She looked over at Ian, and he was just staring at her with those big blue eyes. How could she let him down?

“If you want to become a foster parent, the process will take about three months.” The woman said and she misread Jamie’s alarmed expression. “Yes, girl. It is a lot of work.” Her voice was gleeful, like she had caught Jamie in a lie. Ian started to hunch in on himself again.

“It’s not that.” Jamie hurriedly, explained. “There’s no way for it to be quicker? Three months is a long time for him, Ian, to be...” she hesitated at this next word, not wanting to hurt Ian further but she couldn’t think of anything else. “Unwanted.”

The woman’s expression changed and she paused before saying into the phone. “Edgar? I’ll call you back.” She hung up the phone. “You are serious about this, aren’t you?” Her tone had completely changed, too. To one of mild wonder.

Jamie nodded.

“Ian.” The woman addressed the black

haired boy, and Ian turned his eyes from Jamie to the woman. “Do you want to live with this girl?” The woman gestured at Jamie.

Jamie’s heart dropped, plummeted straight to her feet. She had stated that she wanted him, but hadn’t considered his wishes. What if he said no? What if moving place to place was preferable to living with a lowly waitress?

Ian looked from the woman to Jamie and back, before slowly nodding. Jamie’s heart leapt from where it resided in her feet to flying along the ceiling. He wanted to live with her!

“Then, girl. Let me inform you that if becoming a foster parent is too long of a wait, it’ll only take about a month, or so, to be able to adopt him. If everything checks out, of course.”

Adopt him? She could adopt him? Rather than choosing what she wanted again, she turned to Ian.

“Ian?” Jamie’s voice was gentle. “Do you want to be adopted. By me?” Again, the slow nod. Jamie couldn’t help it she broke out into a smile. “I’d like that, too.”

The woman rifled through her purse, pulled out a large brown wallet and then handed Jamie a business card. Edgar Monroe. Social Worker. And a phone number.

“Contact Edgar when you can and he’ll start the process.” Jamie accepted the business card.

“Well, that’s settled. Can we eat now?” The woman’s voice almost had a hint of levity in it.

“Of course. Please enjoy. And, thank you.” Jamie gave the woman, and then Ian, a wide smile. The woman nodded before picking up for fork and starting to eat.

The adoption process ended up being a lot of paperwork and a lot of check-ins. Jamie’s apartment was inspected and she was told she needed a bedroom for Ian. It took two days for Jamie to clear out the smaller bedroom. It had been her craft room. Yarn and ball winders, paint, and easels, card stock and stamps, and several storage containers of miscellaneous items. These things filled up a corner of her living room, but she didn’t mind. She left her desk and chair, having cleaned out the desk and purchased a bed. It took her a couple hours to build the bed frame but after that,

everything else was simple. She had a bedroom fit for an 8 year old boy.

They did background checks, credit checks and probably a dozen other checks she never knew about, on her. She also had to hire a lawyer, which, luckily, the cost of which the state covered.

In just under a month, from her bold words to Helen Baldwin, the woman who had been with Ian at the restaurant and Ian's current foster mother, Jamie was informed she was approved and she could take Ian home tomorrow.

She had seen the boy several times during the month, having twice weekly meetings with both him and a therapist. She spent these meetings learning why he didn't talk and how to deal with his occasional panic attacks and anxieties. These worried Jamie but she was confident she could deal with them, for Ian's sake.

Each time after these meetings, before Jamie said good-bye to him, she'd ask him if he was sure he wanted to live with her. After the fifth meeting, before she even asked, Ian had raised a hand and patted her on the arm lightly, nodding, a smile on his face. It was tiny, just a slight upward tilt to his mouth, but it was there.

And now it was time. It was here. Tomorrow she would open her door to Ian and invite him into his new, permanent home.

Jamie fell asleep with a smile on her face, looking forward to seeing a real smile on her new son's face.



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Bolt

From
The
Blue

By Realme

I spotted him in the gallery of Classical statues, of all places. My city's art museum is one of the best in the country and I go there often to get away from the harsh reality of the world and surround myself with beauty. When the school groups go through, I get even more beauty surrounding me.

But it was spring break, and no laughing lines of children wound their way through the emperors and philosophers and Olympic athletes. No perfection of the flesh to distract me from the perfection of marble.

Until I saw him.

He was alone, which is not to say he was unaccompanied. His father and mother stood nearby, father texting, mother absently staring at the statues without really seeing them. The boy, however, was all eyes.

He looked twelve or so, with a slim figure topped by a shock of cornflower hair. Beneath that was a pair of huge eyes of a liquid brown so dark as to almost be black. They were his most stunning feature, so odd and alluring against that pale freckled skin. He was going from statue to statue taking pictures with his phone.

I suppressed a smile. An alluring boy entranced with 2,000 year-old nude statues? He could have been me twenty years ago. I loved coming to this museum, to this very gallery, long before I realized just why it attracted me so.

"Haven't you taken enough pictures?" his father griped as the boy snapped a photo of a satyr.

"It's cool," the boy objected. He had a sweet voice, made sour by having to defend himself for what sounded like the thousandth time.

"Mummies are cool," Dad said.

"I took pictures of those too."

Yeah, as a cover for your real interests, I thought.

"I don't want to spend all day here," Mom put in. Her arms were crossed, her stance impatient.

The kid took another photo. The statues were arranged in a line down the center of the room, with more along the walls. The family was about halfway down the center line of statues, with me a bit behind.

"Come on, Danny," his father sighed. He glanced at the boy's next shot and shrugged. "You already took a photo of that goat thing."

"It's called a satyr."

"Whatever."

The parents, if I can call them that, moved ahead. I skipped a couple of statues and came up to the boy. I made an obvious motion with my head to show that I was peering at his photo. The dancing satyr was perfectly framed. He had angled it so that no other statues appeared in the background to distract from this image of pagan exuberance.

He looked up at me uncertainly. I looked from him to the photo and back again and gave him a thumb's up. I was rewarded with a shy smile.

I moved over to the statues along the wall just as his father turned back to him. My heart beat fast as I admired a statue of Aphrodite that society said I should find beautiful. Beyond purely artistic admiration, I did not. I suspect little Danny didn't either.

"We're going to the next gallery," Dad said.

"You stay in the Classics section, OK?"

"All right," Danny said. It sounded fine by

him.

“And don’t take forever.”

“I won’t,” he moped.

I kept my eyes on the aesthetically perfect yet completely unattractive Aphrodite as their footsteps receded.

Casually I walked to the next statue, just happening to glance his direction. We were alone. He was still staring at the satyr, and a lovely fellow he was too.

The satyr, that is. And the boy.

I cut across the room to one of my favorite sculptures. It showed Pan teaching a young boy how to play the Pan Pipes. Pan sat on a tree stump, all carved of the purest marble, while the boy leaned up against him, the god’s hairy legs embracing him. One of Pan’s hands was on the boy’s hip, the other gesturing towards the pipes. The boy had a languid look on his face, his lips pursed out of pleasure for the music or the proximity of this older, more experienced male.

I stood before it. What beauty. What a celebration of the old Classical culture.

I heard a step beside me. The boy had joined me, standing a little apart.

“Pan and Daphnis,” I told him. “Daphnis was the son of Hermes and a nymph, but his parents abandoned him when he was a baby. Some shepherds discovered him under a tree and saved his life. Pan raised him and taught him everything he needed to know to be a man.”

“Pan is the Latin name. Dionysios is his Greek name,” the boy said.

I nodded, impressed.

“Sounds like you’ve been doing some reading.”

“In the library.” He stole a glance at the doorway through which his parents had disappeared. “When I get a chance.”

“Reading is one of the best things you can do. It takes you beyond the limits of your day-to-day life.”

“I know.” The boy sounded defiant, resentful, but not of me. He wasn’t accustomed to having an adult agree with him on this.

My heart racing now, I said, “You like ancient history.”

He nodded eagerly and took a photo of Pan and Daphnis.

“What’s your favorite era?” I asked. I already knew, but I wanted to keep up the conversation.

“Ancient Greece and Rome,” he said, then quickly added, “It’s all cool, though.”

“Ancient Greece and Rome are the best,” I said. “You’ve got taste.”

That got me another smile, the kind of surprised smile someone makes when they discover an unexpected gift. I could tell this boy was starving. Starving for affection. Starving for approval. Starving for understanding.

He took another couple of shots of Pan and the youth, moving around it to get it from all angles. I stepped a little aside to give him room, glancing at the doorway. When I looked back at his phone I saw him doing something strange. He was putting the satyr photos in a separate album. As he opened up the album I saw a whole bunch of images, all statues, all of men, many of them close-ups.

He looked over his shoulder and saw me watching. That lovely face turned scarlet.

“It’s OK,” I said, my throat having gone dry.

“I just like, um, you know I...”

I looked him in the eye. “It’s OK.”

He held my gaze. His lips trembled. For a moment I thought he’d break into tears. Then he looked over my shoulder and his eyes went wide.

“Cool!” he said, and rushed over to a statue of a gladiator. I strolled after him.

Just as I made it to him, a museum guard walked in. My heart did a flip flop.

“This is a *murmillio*,” Danny told me. “You can tell because he’s got a big shield and a sword. Plus he’s got that funny helmet that covers his face and has a fish as a crest.”

“Wow, you know a lot.”

The museum guard barely glanced at us as he passed through to another gallery. Nothing suspect here. We were obviously together.

“There were lots of types of gladiators,” he said, taking a photo of the *murmillio*. The man’s chest was bare and he wore only a loincloth. “The *retiarius* had a net and a trident, the *velites* threw spears at each other, and the

dimachaerus fought holding a sword in each hand.”

“Cool.” I knew all this, of course. When I was his age I had absorbed everything I could find on Classical civilization. He obviously did the same.

“Here’s another one!” He moved off. I smiled at his eagerness. It was a statue of a cestus, an ancient boxer, muscular and nude and proud.

“I’m surprised you never came here before,” I said.

“Oh, we’re on vacation. We don’t live here.”

My heart sank. I stood where I was, desolate.

Well, what did I expect? That we would secretly meet at the museum every weekend to talk about satyrs and gladiators? That I’d take him to the museum cafeteria and stuff him with hamburgers and fries, tousling that shock of blonde hair as he eagerly told me everything he had read that week? That his parents would let him out alone, and that he’d come over to my house to see my collection of art? That I could teach him everything I had desperately wanted a man to teach me when I was his age?

Yes, I had hoped for all those things, a million vivid fantasies flashing through my mind the instant we had made our first connection. What a romantic I was. What a fool. But was I really a fool? Couldn’t all that have happened if it wasn’t for a cruel trick of geography?

“Danny, will you hurry up?” Mom had burst back into the gallery, looking even more impatient than before. Why take a kid to a museum if you’re not going to let him enjoy it?

I stared at a statue. Danny stared at a different statue, his back to me. Our immediate separation confirmed our complicity, and our mutual understanding.

“I’ll be there in a minute. I just need some more pictures for my school assignment.”

“Well, hurry up. You got one minute, mister.”

She stomped back out of the room. I gave him a sly look.

“School assignment?”

He replied with a bashful smile. “It was the only way to get them here.”

We both laughed, but kept our laughter low.

Yes, he understood the need for secrecy. This boy understood so much. And I understood this was our last minute together. I struggled to find the right words.

“Keep on reading,” I said. “When you get a bit older you’ll get to do whatever you want.”

He nodded, glanced over his shoulder.

I needed to say more. But what? I looked at him. Those liquid brown eyes stared back at me. What was I seeing there? What did I need to tell him? Think, damn you! No time! No time!

“Danny.”

“Yes?” He didn’t sound surprised that I knew his name. Of course I had been listening. Of course I had been paying attention.

“It’s not you. It’s them.”

He stared at me. Slowly nodded. “Yeah.”

Then his face broke into the warmest, happiest smile I have ever seen from a boy. He raised his phone and snapped a picture of me standing in front of the statue I had turned to when his mother had burst in. As he lowered his phone, I could see he was putting it in his secret folder. He glanced over his shoulder again.

“I have to go.”

“Goodbye.”

“Goodbye.”

He gave me a little wave and scampered off.

Scampered right out of my life.

But not completely, because he’ll always be there.

I looked back at the statue I stood in front of, the one I had shared a photo with, and focused on it for the first time.

It was a bronze statue of Zeus, legs apart, arms outstretched, completely nude, throwing a lightning bolt.

Yeah, a bolt from the blue. For both of us.

